LETTERS

FROM

FRANCE:

CONTAINING

A GREAT VARIETY OF INTERESTING AND ORIGINAL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS THAT HAVE LATELY OCCURRED IN THAT COUNTRY,

AND

PARTICULARLY RESPECTING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1792.

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LETTERS FROM FRANCE.

LETTER I.

Paris, Feb. 10, 1793.

THE faction of the anarchiſts deſired that the French king ſhould be put to death without the tedious forms of a trial. This opinion, however, was confined to the ſummit of the Mountain, that elevated region, where, aloof from all the ordinary feelings of our nature, no one is diverted from his purpoſe by the weakneſs of humanity, or the compunction of remorſe; where urbanity is conſidered as an ariſtocratical infringe-

ment of les grandes principes, and mercy as a crime de leze-nation *.

The trial of the king was decreed by the National Convention, and the eleventh of December was fixed upon for that purpoſe. Lewis the ſixteenth had ſupported his long impriſonment with fortitude; and, when he heard that the day for his trial was fixed, he ſaid with great calmneſs, "Eh bien! qu'on me guillotine ſi on veut; je ſuis preparé †."

A ſhort time after the taking of the Baſtile the king was obſerved reading the hiſtory of Charles the firſt. "Why, ſire," ſaid an attendant, "do you read that hiſtory? it will make you melancholy." "Je me mets dans l'eſprit," replied the king, "qu'un jour je finirai comme lui ‡."

* The great principles—High treaſon.

† "Well! let them *guillotine* me if they will; I am prepared."

‡ "I feel an impreſſion on my mind, that one day I ſhall end like him."

It

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It appears that the French queen has alſo choſen a model for her behaviour, in the laſt ſcene of life, from the Engliſh annals; for ſince her impriſonment ſhe has been employed in reading the hiſtory of Mary queen of Scots. Marie Antoinette, however, is in no danger of ſharing the ſame fate: if ſhe were, her haughty indignant ſpirit, which preferred the chance of loſing empire and life, to the certainty of retaining any thing leſs than abſolute dominion, would probably meet death with becoming dignity, feeling, that "to be weak is to be miſerable, doing or ſuffering."

When the municipal officers went to the Temple, and took from the royal priſoners their pocket knives, ſciſſars, razors, &c. the king, while ſearching his pockets, ſaid, "on n'a rien à craindre de moi *." The queen exclaimed in a ſcornful tone, "Il faut prendre auſſi

* "They have nothing to fear from me."

nos aiguilles; car elles piquent bien vivement *."

Until the trial began the king was allowed to dine and ſup with his family. After eating a good dinner he uſually played two or three games at piquet with the queen; and, when they had finiſhed, the municipal officer upon guard in the apartment, without ſpeaking, made a movement towards the door, which the queen underſtood, and was obliged to riſe immediately, and leave the room.

Lewis the ſixteenth behaved at the bar of the National Convention with calmneſs, and even dignity. He remembered that he had been a king; and he proved that he had not that imbecility of mind which has been generally imputed to him. Philoſophy, ſpeaking the words of truth and ſoberneſs, may

* "You ought to take our needles too; for they can prick very ſharply."

tell

tell us, that kings, like other men, ought to be made accountable for their actions; but ſhe will alſo admit, that their faults have ſtronger claims to compaſſion than thoſe of other men—educated, as they uſually are, in deluſion and error. Perhaps it is not very extraordinary, that Lewis the ſixteenth, who had been taught from his earlieſt infancy "th' enormous faith of thouſands made for one," and who had never heard of any privileges but his own, recollecting what he was "ſeventeen years ago," conſidered ſlavery as the natural inheritance of his ſubjects, and the rights of man as but another term for treaſon. It muſt alſo be admitted, that, when a king undergoes the ſame puniſhment as another man, he is in truth puniſhed more. The National Convention, if they determine to puniſh the dethroned monarch, will condemn him to die: but do they, who are going to le-

giſlate for a mighty empire, know ſo little of the human heart, as not to know that to him the humiliation he already ſuffers is worſe than death? After having obliged him to appear before them, all farther puniſhment is ſuperfluous. When led through the ſtreets of Paris as a priſoner, can he forget how often he has paſſed through thoſe ſtreets amidſt the acclamations of the ſubject multitude? and, when condemned to ſtand at the bar of their aſſembly, till the preſident gives him leave to ſit down, does not his remembrance—his agonized remembrance—glance back on thoſe days, when to be ſeated in his preſence was the appropriated privilege to which only a few could aſpire?

Princes are placed in a ſort of artificial condition: they live at a ſullen diſtance from the deareſt enjoyments of life, and are alſo in general exempted from its calamities. The poet, therefore, when

when he wiſhes to rouſe our paſſions, paints ſome ſtriking viciſſitude of power and greatneſs. The regular murmurs of a gentle ſtream do not diſturb the penſive meditation of the wanderer, who muſes on its banks—it is the headlong torrent, ruſhing from its dizzy height over the fragments of the broken cliff, that ſeizes our aſtoniſhed attention.

It was obſerved by ſome perſons who were placed near the French king, when he appeared at the bar of the Convention, that he received the firſt papers which were ſhewn to him with haughty impatience, almoſt ſnatching them from the hand of the deputy by whom they were preſented, and who, indeed, performed that office in a manner which did little honour to his delicacy, his feelings, or his republicaniſm; ſince he who could forget the reſpect due to misfortune—He who could behave to Lewis the ſixteenth, when a priſoner at the bar

of the Convention, as if he had been leſs than a man, would, probably, at the court of Verſailles, have behaved to him as if he had been more. The king, after having recogniſed his own handwriting, in the ſignature of thoſe papers which were firſt given him to examine, was obſerved to receive thoſe which were ſhewn to him afterwards with a ſort of ſubmiſſive gentleneſs, which marked the effect produced upon his mind by the appearance of thoſe fatal teſtimonies—thoſe teſtimonies of his having joined the league of deſpots, in their impotent cruſade againſt the liberty and happineſs of his people—thoſe teſtimonies, that he had not only endeavoured to ſubvert that conſtitution which he had ſworn to maintain, by inviting the armies of Pruſſia and of Auſtria to invade the French territory; but had alſo ſought to undermine the ſpreading principles of liberty, by a ſyſtem of

corruption

corruption which was meant to graſp the whole empire, and included an infinite range of objects, from the moſt important to the moſt minute—from the leading orators of the National Aſſembly to the ballad-ſingers of the ſtreets—from the reports of committees to hand-bills and placards. Hiſtory will, indeed, condemn Lewis the ſixteenth. The evidence of his guilt is clear; and the hiſtorian will fulfil his duty in paſſing ſentence upon his memory; for the hiſtorian has not, like the judge, the prerogative to pardon. But Lewis the ſixteenth will not ſtand alone at the bar of poſterity. His judges alſo muſt appear at that tribunal: on them, alſo, the hiſtorian will paſs ſentence. He will behold the ſame men acting at once as accuſers, party, and judge; he will behold the unfortunate monarch deprived, not only of his inviolability as a king, but of his rights as a citizen; and perhaps the ir-

revocable decree of poſterity may reverſe that of the National Convention.

The detail of the interrogation which the French king underwent at the bar of the National Convention is too well known to need repetition.—He was conducted back to the Temple about ſix in the evening: the night was dark; but the town was illuminated; and thoſe objects which appeared only half formed, and were ſeen indiſtinctly, imagination finiſhed and filled up, as beſt ſuited the gloomy impreſſions of the moment. By the way, ſince the ſecond of September, when the whole town was lighted up for ſecurity, an illumination at Paris appears no gaudy pageant, which beams the ſymbol of public feſtivity; but is conſidered as the harbinger of danger—the ſignal of alarm—the tocſin of night. A conſiderable number of horſe, as well as foot-guards, formed the eſcort of the king; and the trampling of the horſes' feet—the hoarſe

ſounds

ſounds of the collected multitude—the beating of drums—the frequent report of fire-arms—all conſpired to excite the moſt ſolemn emotions. The long page of human hiſtory ruſhed upon the mind—age after age aroſe to memory, in ſad ſucceſſion, like the line of Banquo; and each ſeemed disfigured by crimes or darkened by calamity. The paſt was clouded with horror—a great experiment was about to be made for the future; but it was impoſſible to reflect, without trembling anxiety, that the ſtake was human happineſs, and that the iſſue was doubtful, while all that could be calculated with certainty was, that millions muſt periſh in the trial. It is aſſerted that the philoſophers of France produced the revolution; I believe this to be an error. They, indeed, have diſſeminated the principles which form the baſis of the new fabric of French government; but the ancient ſyſtem was

overthrown, not becauſe it was unphiloſophical, but becauſe it could be upheld no longer. The revolution was the effect of imperious neceſſity: for, whatever permanent good may reſult from a change of government, the temporary evil is ſo certain, that every age is diſpoſed to leave that work to a ſucceeding generation. The inſtinct of the people teaches them, that in framing a new government they can only hope, like Moſes, to ſee the promiſed land, but not to enter it. They may plant the ſeeds of general proſperity, ſown with toil and trouble, and bathed in blood; but the blooming vegetation and the golden fruit belong to another race of men.

The defence of Lewis the ſixteenth, which was made by his counſel on the twenty-ſixth of December, though it failed to prove his innocence, at leaſt intereſted the humane part of the audience

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in behalf of his misfortunes: and such of that audience as reflected, that he who now stood an arraigned criminal at the bar of the Convention, had, four years ago, the destiny of twenty-five millions of people at the disposal of his will, felt that, whatever were his sins against the nation, he was already punished enough.

The discussion upon the king's defence was continued for many successive days in the National Convention, which became agitated by the most violent commotions. The faction of the Mountain repeatedly interrupted the deliberations on this subject by scenes of tumult and disorder hitherto unknown, even in that turbulent assembly. It was at that time believed, that a great majority of the National Convention desired, after passing sentence on the king, to appeal to the primary assemblies of the people. The Mountain determined to oppose this

this meaſure by every effort in their power. Things appeared to be again haſtening to ſome great criſis; both parties went armed to the Convention; a ſecond maſſacre was expected, which, it was aſſerted, would include not only the royal family, but all thoſe members of the Convention who ſhould give their votes in the king's favour. The party of Gironde took meaſures for defence: meetings for this purpoſe were held in the dead of night with ſome of the Fedérés, of whom twelve thouſand had reached Paris. Troops were daily arriving from the departments; and the moment ſeemed faſt approaching when the two conflicting parties were to meaſure their ſtrength. Nor could any ſenſation be more replete with horror than that which this fearful expectation excited. Imagination already beheld, like Macbeth, aërial daggers, and anticipated a ſort of dark unknown danger, to which

which it could ſet no limits; ſince the wild ſpirit of popular fury, when ſet looſe, might paſs the bounds preſcribed by the edicts of its abettors, as the ocean flood ſometimes by an irreſiſtible inundation throws down the feeble dykes which would arreſt its progreſs.

At this time a commotion happened at one of the theatres, which, though not material in itſelf, ſerved to mark the temper of the contending parties. A piece had lately been produced at that theatre, entitled, "L' Ami des Loix," which, it was ſaid, was written before the tenth of Auguſt, enforcing the duty of obedience to the order of things then exiſting, and drawing a portrait of the patriots, as if they were lovers of anarchy. It happened whimſically enough, that this caricature of patriotiſm proved a faithful likeneſs of Robeſpierre, Marat, &c.; and it alſo happened, that that love of order, and ſubmiſſion to the laws

then exiſting, which, while the conduct of the court made another revolution neceſſary, would have been conſidered as treaſon to the cauſe of liberty in this country, was now preached by every orthodox republican. Order and laws, however, being entirely ſubverſive of Maratiſm, this piece had excited violent indignation in that faction. The Jacobins and the municipality of Paris formed a league againſt it; and the latter ſovereign power ſent an order to the theatre, forbidding the performance. The people, in the mean time, aſſembled in conſiderable numbers round the theatre, and inſiſted that the play ſhould be performed; while the author of the piece preſented himſelf at the bar of the Convention, and related what was paſſing at the theatre.—The Convention paſſed to the order of the day, declaring as their reaſon for ſo doing, that the municipality had no right to controul the repreſentation.

ſentation. Santerre, commander in chief of the Pariſian national guard, repaired to the theatre, in order to enforce ſubmiſſion to the municipality. This general had remained totally inactive on the ſecond of September, when called upon by Petion to prevent the maſſacres; but, whatever reluctance Santerre might feel to check aſſaſſination and murder, he thought it was highly neceſſary to prevent the alarming progreſs of order and law; and for that purpoſe he haſtened, ſurrounded by ſoldiers with their ſabres drawn, to prevent the repreſentation of the piece. But the commandant of the Fedérés, who had alſo marched his troops to the field of action, told Santerre, that, if he attempted to interrupt the performance, the Fedérés would draw up their cannon before the theatre, and reduce it to aſhes. Santerre hung his head, lamented the decline of municipal

deſpotiſm,

deſpotiſm, and retired. The piece was acted amidſt the loudeſt acclamations.

The next day the commune of Paris took its revenge of theſe friends of law, by ordering all the public places to be ſhut up for a week: this order was denounced and diſcuſſed in the National Convention. That aſſembly, wearied, perhaps aſhamed, of its paſt forbearance towards the commune, which on all occaſions acts as if it had ſucceeded by right of inheritance to the ancient power of the houſe of Bourbon, determined to throw the police of the city into the hands of the executive council during the king's trial; and the executive council inſtantly repealed the order of the commune.

The day after the commotion at the theatre, the Marſeillois, and the other Fedérés who were then at Paris, appeared at the bar of the National Convention;

tion; and the Marſeillois, in the name of the eighty-four departments, preſented an addreſs, which breathed forth the moſt ardent patriotiſm, the moſt profound ſubmiſſion to the laws, and the moſt inflexible hatred of anarchy. If the liberty of France, after all the convulſions it ſuſtains, ſhall at length be firmly eſtabliſhed, the Marſeillois will have a right to claim immortal pre-eminence amongſt the ſons of freedom. Thoſe children of the ſun, whoſe ardent ſouls glow with the pureſt fires of patriotiſm; and who have given their country examples of that heroic valour, which the ſacred love of freedom can alone inſpire, have ſhewn that, while they beſt defend its cauſe, they alſo beſt underſtand its principles. They have ſaid to their enthuſiaſtic zeal, "Thus far thou ſhalt go, and no farther;" nor have they ſullied their laurels by one act of diſobedience to the laws.

When

When the ſanguinary commune of Paris, immediately after the maſſacres of September, diſpatched circular letters to all the departments, ſpreading over the kingdom their edicts of death; or, to uſe their own language, ordering the municipal officers to clear the priſons of ariſtocrats; the Marſeillois haſtened to the priſons of their city, but not, like the avenging fiends who encompaſſed the abbey of St. Germains, to ſlaughter unreſiſting victims. The Marſeillois came like miniſtering angels of mercy, to inſpire the trembling wretch with fortitude—to cheer the drooping ſpirit—to ſuſtain the failing heart—to declare that every priſoner was under the protection of the law; and, if it were neceſſary, ſhould by them be defended from violence. The generous Marſeillois, with the noble courage of the lion, diſdained to wound a proſtrate enemy, and left to

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the commune of Paris to practiſe the ſullen rapacity of the vulture.

When the Fedérés appeared at the bar of the Convention, they demanded permiſſion to guard the aſſembly in conjunction with the national guard of Paris. "If it is an honour," ſaid they, "we have an equal right with the Pariſians to partake it—if there is danger, we demand our ſhare."—"Si les hommes du deux Septembre ont encore l'audace de ſe montrer, c'eſt avec les hommes du dix Août qu'ils auront à combattre, c'eſt ici un cartel de la vertu au vice*." This addreſs appeared to electrify the whole aſſembly. It was inſtantly, and almoſt unanimouſly decreed that the Fedérés ſhould, together with the Pariſians, guard the Convention;

* "If the men of the ſecond of September dare again appear, it is with the men of the tenth of Auguſt that they will have to engage—it will be the cartel of virtue and of vice."

nor

nor did the Mountain dare to oppoſe the decree, but remained in a ſort of palſied ſtupefaction.

On the 14th of January the king's trial, which had been ſuſpended for a week, was reſumed, and a few days after the fate of the unhappy monarch was decided. The attention of all Europe was fixed in anxious ſuſpenſe on the iſſue of this important trial; and the ſituation of Lewis the ſixteenth excited univerſal ſympathy. But at Paris it caſt a peculiar horror—a ſort of local gloom over the whole city; it ſeemed as if the National Convention had choſen the very means moſt proper to re-kindle the dying flame of loyalty. We remembered that the king had betrayed his people, till, by the rigour of their reſentment, they made us loſe the ſenſe of his guilt in the greatneſs of his calamities. They wiſhed us to feel indignation at his offence, and they compelled us to weep for his misfortunes,

fortunes. They called on our abhorrence of the ungenerous uſe he had made of the power with which he was entruſted, and we ſaw how little magnanimous was the uſe which they made of theirs. Their deciſion ſeemed at once ſo cruel and ſo impolitic, that it is not ſurpriſing if, inſtead of appearing to foreign nations in the light of a painful ſacrifice made to public ſecurity, it bore the aſpect of public ſecurity ſacrificed to inhumanity and vengeance. It were, however, an error to believe, either that Lewis the ſixteenth fell the victim of that barbarous thirſt for his blood diſplayed by the chiefs of the Mountain, or that he was devoted to death by the puſillanimity of thoſe who were influenced by conſiderations of their own perſonal ſafety. No; while we admire the heroic courage of ſuch as, in defiance of the popular outcry, pleaded with pathetic eloquence the cauſe of mercy;

while

while we love the humanity of Briſſot, the philoſophy of Condorcet, we muſt admit, that amongſt thoſe who voted for the death of Lewis the ſixteenth are found men equally incapable of being actuated by fear or by vengeance; men, who, conſidering the king's death as eſſential to the ſecurity of the republic, pronounced the fatal ſentence in the bitterneſs of their ſouls, and as the performance of a cruel duty which their country imperiouſly required.

The propoſition of an appeal to the departments was rejected, becauſe it was apprehended, that ſuch an appeal might lead to civil war. The primary aſſemblies muſt have been called together: the ariſtocrats and the demagogues would alike have endeavoured to influence theſe aſſemblies by the force of intrigue and corruption; and the minds of the people would have been ſolely occupied by this affair, at the moment

when it was neceſſary to prepare for the approaching formidable campaign. Theſe were the evils which were dreaded from an appeal to the people, while all the good which could have reſulted from this meaſure would have been that of proving to the world, that, in whatever abhorrence the death of the French king may be held by Europe, or by poſterity, this act of ſeverity was demanded by the voice of the whole French nation. It was feared, that, if Lewis the ſixteenth were detained in captivity, the bourgeois of Paris, if their commerce languiſhed—if proviſions became dear—if the armies of the republic ſuſtained any defeat, might demand the reſtoration of their dethroned monarch: yet all the departments of France had, even while they reprobated the evils of anarchy, declared their inviolable attachment to a republican form of government. Such a difference of opi-

nion, therefore, would have produced the moſt terrible commotions. Laſtly, it was aſſerted, that, if the king were ſent into exile, he would, after the republic had exhauſted all the national treaſures in ſupport of war, after the people had become wearied of long continued ſtruggles for liberty, return at the head of a powerful army, which would be joined by all the malcontents of France, and aſſiſted by all the potentates of Europe.

It was obſerved, that, although the family of Stuart, baniſhed by the Engliſh nation, wandered over Europe, unpitied and abandoned, the family of Bourbon would as certainly find ſupport and aſſiſtance. England had only changed the family of its ſovereign; France had changed the form of its government. England only deſired to retain a limited monarchy; France had not only ſubverted monarchy, and eſtabliſhed a republic,

public, but had ſet principles on float which, if ſuffered to ſpread, might lead to the general ſubverſion of monarchical power. The princes of Europe had nothing to dread from the baniſhment of James the ſecond; but their deſcendants had one common cauſe with Louis the ſixteenth; and what he could never have hoped from their generoſity, he might from their policy have obtained.

In addition to the foregoing reaſons for putting the unfortunate monarch to death, there was yet another reaſon, perhaps ſtronger than all the reſt: and this was, that the National Convention felt itſelf reduced to the diſmal alternative of leading the king to the ſcaffold, or of ſeeing not only himſelf but his whole family torn in pieces by the enraged populace. On the 10th of Auguſt, and the day following, more than an hundred carts, loaded with dead bodies, had paſſed through the ſtreets of Paris: the

people remembered that fatal ſpectacle—they conſidered their fallen relations and friends as the victims of the court, and would too certainly have ſatiated their vengeance in the moſt inhuman manner: nor had the Convention any power to prevent this violence, in which the National Guard and the Fedérés would have joined.

The French king received the intelligence of his approaching fate without diſmay. He diſplayed far more firmneſs upon the ſcaffold than he had done upon the throne, and atoned for the weakneſs and inconſiſtency of his conduct in life, by the calmneſs and fortitude of his behaviour in death. The evening before his execution, his family, from whom he had been ſeparated ſince the commencement of his trial, were conducted to the tower of the Temple, and allowed the ſad indulgence of a laſt interview, unmoleſted by the preſence of his

his guards. Alas! when imagination pictured the anguiſh of ſuch an interview, it was not neceſſary to look back upon the former elevation of the ſufferer, in order to pity the gloomy tranſition in his fate! It was not neceſſary to recollect, that he who was the following morning to ſuffer death upon the ſcaffold, was once the firſt monarch of Europe, and would be led to execution through the ſtreets of his own capital! It was enough to conſider this unfortunate perſon as a man, a huſband, a father! Ah, ſurely, amidſt the agonies of final ſeparation from thoſe to whom we are bound by the ſtrongeſt ties of nature and affection! ſurely when we cling to thoſe we love, in the unutterable pang of a laſt embrace —in ſuch moments the monarch muſt forget his crown, and the regrets of diſappointed ambition muſt be unfelt amidſt the anguiſh which overwhelms the broken heart.—That anguiſh was not con-

fined to the boſom of the king, the queen, and his ſiſter. The princeſs, his daughter, has attained that age when perhaps the ſoul is moſt ſuſceptible of ſtrong impreſſions, and its ſenſibility moſt exquiſite. Even the young prince, who is only in his ninth year, caught the infectious ſorrow, and while his eyes were bathed in tears, cried, ſobbing, to Santerre, "Ah, l'aiſſez moi courir les rues!—j'irai aux diſtricts—j'irai a tous les ſections, demander grace pour mon papa*!"

The king had ſufficient firmneſs to avoid ſeeing his family on the morning of his execution! He deſired the queen might be told that he was unable to bear the ſight of her and his children in thoſe laſt moments! He took a ring off his finger, which contained ſome of his own

* "Oh! let me run through the ſtreets—I will go to the diſtricts—I will go to all the ſections, and beg for my papa."

hair,

hair, of the queen's, and of his two children, and desired it might be given to the queen. He called the municipal officers round him, and told them, it was his dying request, that Clery, his valet de chambre, might remain with his son. He then said to Santerre, "* Marchons;" and after crossing, with a hurried pace, the inner court of the Temple, he got into the mayor's carriage, which was in waiting, and was attended by his confessor.

It is certain that many of those acts of illegal power, which brought the unhappy monarch to the scaffold, were dictated by the fanatical and discontented clergy which swarmed about his palace; by non-juring bishops and archbishops, men who having lost their wealth and their influence by the revolution, prompted the king to run all risques in order to gratify their own resentment. Some

* "Let us go."

good, however, aroſe from this evil. In order to increaſe their influence, they had led the king into habits of conſtant devotion; and he had found in devotion what it is natural for the human heart to find, a refuge from calamity. In proportion as his misfortunes increaſed, and the proſpects of this world darkened around him, he appears to have ſought the ſoothing perſpective of a better region; and the gloomy ſolitude of his priſon was cheered by the bright viſions of futurity. If ſuch is the effect even of a ſuperſtitious and bigoted devotion, let the philoſophers of France beware of baniſhing religion from their country becauſe of its ancient abuſes. Many of the French philoſophers are, indeed, bigots to infidelity, and narrow-minded in unbelief—many of them have rejected what they have not examined, and pronounced judgment upon things of which they are ignorant.

The

The calmneſs which Louis the ſixteenth diſplayed on this great trial of human fortitude, is attributed not only to the ſupport his mind received from religious faith, but alſo to the hope which it is ſaid he cheriſhed, even till his laſt moment, that the people, whom he meant to addreſs from the ſcaffold, would demand that his life might be ſpared. And his confeſſor, from motives of compaſſion, had encouraged him in this hope. After aſcending the ſcaffold with a firm ſtep, twice the unhappy monarch attempted to ſpeak, and twice Santerre prevented him from being heard, by ordering the drums to beat immediately. Alas! had he been permitted to ſpeak, poor was his chance of exciting commiſeration! Thoſe who pitied his calamities had carefully ſhunned that fatal ſpot; and thoſe who moſt immediately ſurrounded him only waited till the ſtroke

was given, in order to dip their pikes and their handkerchiefs in his blood!

Setting aside all considerations of the former elevated rank, or the peculiar misfortunes of the sufferer, to refuse the privilege of utterance to one whose lips are the next moment to be closed in death —has in it something so repugnant to all the feelings of our nature, that it seems a degree of severity which could only have been practised by that man who had remained passive when the cry of humanity called upon him to act, and who was prompted to action at the very moment when the same sentiment urged him to desist. It is, however, asserted by many persons, that Santerre, in having hindered the king from being heard, only performed his duty, and perhaps prevented the most terrible mischiefs. The utmost precaution had indeed been used to avoid any disorder, or the possibility of impeding the execution of the sentence.

Every

Every ſection of Paris was under arms: a third part of the citizens of each ſection were appointed to guard that ſection to which they belonged; a third part to form the eſcort of the king, and a third part to patrol the ſtreets. Forty pieces of cannon were brought to the place of execution! and the fathers, the ſons, and brothers of thoſe who fell on the 10th of Auguſt, had been aſſiduouſly ſelected to ſurround the ſcaffold! It was alſo underſtood, that orders had been iſſued, that any perſon who cried *grace*, ſhould be inſtantly put to death. Notwithſtanding theſe precautions, an addreſs from the king might have produced a popular movement in his favour.

The French are a people of quick ſenſibility: they ſeem in ſome ſort the creatures of paſſion. Ungovernable in their reſentment, cruel and ferocious in their revenge, they yield with no leſs facility to the impulſe of mercy, and the ſympathy of compaſſion. Ever in ex-

tremes, they are capable of the moſt ſublime and the moſt atrocious actions, and inſpire alternate love and deteſtation.

Had the king being able to excite the pity of any part of that armed multitude which filled the vaſt Place de la Revolution, a profuſion of blood might have been ſpilt—A civil warmight have ſpread deſolation through the city of Paris; but the life of the king would have been no leſs ſacrificed—and inſtead of receiving death at one ſtroke, he would probably have fallen pierced by a thouſand wounds. Two perſons who were on the ſcaffold aſſert, that the unhappy monarch, finding the hope he had cheriſhed, of awakening the compaſſion of the people, fruſtrated by the impoſſibility of his being heard, as a laſt reſource, declared that he had ſecrets to reveal of importance to the ſafety of the ſtate, and deſired he might be led to the National

tional Convention. Some of the guards who heard this declaration, cried, "Yes, let him go to the Convention!"—Others ſaid "No."—Had the king been conducted to the Convention, it is eaſy to imagine the effect which would have been produced on the minds of the people, by the ſight of their former monarch led through the ſtreets of Paris, with his hands bound, his neck bare, his hair already cut off at the foot of the ſcaffold in preparation for the fatal ſtroke—with no other covering than his ſhirt. At that ſight the enraged populace would have melted into tenderneſs, and the Pariſian women, among whom were numbers who paſſed the day in tears of unavailing regret, would have ruſhed between the monarch and his guards, and have attempted his reſcue, even with the riſque of life. Santerre, who foreſaw theſe conſequences, who perceived the danger of this riſing diſpute among

among the guards, called to the executioner to do his office.—Then it was, that deſpair ſeized upon the mind of the unfortunate monarch—his countenance aſſumed a look of horror—twice with agony he repeated, "Je ſuis perdu! je ſuis perdu*!" His confeſſor meantime called to him from the foot of the ſcaffold, "Louis, fils de St. Louis, montez au ciel†;" and in one moment he was delivered from the evils of mortality.

The executioner held up the bleeding head, and the guards cried "Vive la Republique!" Some dipt their handkerchiefs in the blood—but the greater number, chilled with horror at what had paſſed, deſired the commandant would lead them inſtantly from the ſpot. The hair was ſold in ſeparate treſſes at the

* "I am undone! I am undone!"

† "Son of St. Louis, aſcend to heaven!"

foot

foot of the ſcaffold; and, as if every incident of this tragedy had been intended to diſplay the ſtrange viciſſitudes of human fortune, as if every ſcene were meant "to point a moral," the body was conveyed in a cart to the pariſh church of St. Madelaine, and laid among the bodies of thoſe who had been cruſhed to death on the Place de Louis XV. when Louis the ſixteenth was married, and of thoſe who had fallen before the chateau of the Tuilleries on the 10th of Auguſt.

The grave was filled with quick lime, and a guard placed over it till the corpſe was conſumed. The ground was then carefully levelled with the ſurrounding earth, and no trace or veſtige remains of that ſpot to which, ſhrouded by the doubtful gloom of twilight, ancient loyalty might have repaired, and poured a tear, or ſuperſtition breathed its ritual for the departed ſpirit.

That ſympathy which the misfortunes of Louis the ſixteenth excited in his behalf, is now transferred to his family. Whatever have been the faults of the French queen, they have ſurely been expiated by her ſufferings. Madame Elizabeth, his ſiſter, has diſplayed an attachment to her brother, for which thoſe who conſider his cauſe as a good one, will think ſhe almoſt deſerves altars; and even the moſt determined republican of France muſt admit, that to follow the fortunes of a brother, from a palace to a priſon, to reſign liberty, and to riſk life, rather than forſake thoſe we love in their calamities, are generous, and even heroical ſacrifices. The young princeſs was ſo deeply affected by her father's fate that it was for ſome days believed her life was in danger! The prince too was heard to enquire, "Pourquoi a t'on fait mourir mon papa? mon papa n'a pas

pas fait du mal—eſt-ce qu'on me ferai mourir-moi? *" Since the king's death the queen always addreſſes the prince by the appellation of Sire: ſhe does not take her place at table till after he is ſeated, and ſhews him all the cuſtomary forms of reſpect practiſed towards the repreſentative of the houſe of Bourbon. Such ceremonies are not unavailing, if they afford conſolation or relief in the ſolitude of that priſon where this unfortunate family will probably paſs years of joyleſs exiſtence. In that priſon where the windows only admit a dim religious light—where no ſound is heard except the claſhing of arms, is ſhe immured who was once the leader of pleaſure—who once lived encompaſſed with

" Pomp, and feaſt, and revelry,
" With maſk and antique pageantry."

* " Why have they put my papa to death? my papa had done no harm—will they make me die too?"

The

The queen ſent to aſk mourning of the National Convention. One is ſurpriſed ſhe did not feel with Hamlet,

"'Tis not alone this mourning ſuit,
"Together with all forms, modes, ſhapes of grief,
"That can denote me truly."

At the time of the king's death Kerſaint and Manuel, two members of the ational Convention, diſtinguiſhed for their talents, and Roland, miniſter of the interior, gave in their diſmiſſion. Kerſaint declared he would no longer ſit in the ſame aſſembly with the aſſaſſins of the ſecond of September. The Aſſembly paſſed a decree, that the aſſaſſins ſhould be proſecuted by the miniſter of juſtice — but hitherto, alas, while the crime is engraved on the laſting tablet of human hiſtory, the edicts of puniſhment have been traced in duſt, and ſcattered in air.

Manuel had been accuſed by the chiefs

chiefs of the Mountain of endeavouring, as ſecretary, to ſuppreſs the majority of votes againſt the king, and had been ſo rudely menaced, that in diſguſt he quitted his poſt. Manuel was the George Selwyn of the National Convention; and had often darted on the Mountain the flaſhes of his wit. One day, when he had made that faction feel a ſtroke of pleaſantry, Legendre, who is one of the party, and who was formerly a butcher, exclaimed in a ſcornful tone, "Il faut decreter que Manuel à de l'eſprit." "Il valoit mieux," anſwered Manuel, "de decreter, que je ſuis *bête*, car alors Legendre auroit le droit de me tuer *."

The reſignation of Roland was regret-

* "We muſt decree that Manuel is a wit."—"It would be better to decree that I am a beaſt (which in French phraſeology means a fool), for then Legendre would have a right to kill me."

ted

ted by all, except that faction who could neither forgive his auſtere, inflexible virtues, nor his abhorrence of their vices. He had been marked as one of the victims of September; and, though he had eſcaped aſſaſſination, all the rectitude of his conduct could not ſecure him from calumny. It was aſſerted, that he deteſted the Pariſians, becauſe he expreſſed his deteſtation of the crimes of which Paris had been the theatre; and it was alleged, that he uſurped an improper influence over the departments, becauſe he had aſſiduouſly endeavoured to enlighten and to inſtruct them. The purity of his reputation remained as untainted by theſe accuſations, as the ſun-beam by the cloud which paſſes over it. Nor would Roland have been driven from his poſt by the cenſure of the chiefs of the Mountain. The hatred they bore him was in the natural order of things:

he

he had been the firſt to denounce their crimes, and to demand their puniſhment.

"Aſk you what provocation he has had?
"The ſtrong antipathy of good to bad."

But Roland found that it was not alone the faction of the Mountain by whom his conduct was diſapproved. He found many perſons, who, though incapable of the actions which excited his abhorrence, were leſs delicate in morals than himſelf, and blamed the impatience he expreſſed at the evils of the revolution. Thoſe perſons declared, that it was not extraordinary if the people of Paris, who had ſo lately prevented the armies of Pruſſia and Auſtria from invading their city, and perhaps reducing it to aſhes, by an inſurrection, that had overthrown the government, had for a while

while forgotten the reſpect due to laws, when, by their adherence to thoſe which they had once believed ſecured their freedom and happineſs, they had been nearly led to ruin, which they had only eſcaped by violating and ſubverting them altogether.—Thus, the only crime imputed to Roland was that rigid virtue of which his contemporaries were not worthy—his ſole offence was hating vice too much.—But Roland diſdained all accommodating principles, and retired from office for no other reaſon than that he was too pure to hold it. Perhaps he may again be called from the ſtation of a private citizen, by the voice of his country: if not, he has done enough for immortality, and when, in peruſing the hiſtory of the French revolution, the mind is fatigued with the relation of thoſe crimes which diſgrace one diſaſtrous page, it will turn to the unſullied

worth

worth of Roland, and find repoſe and comfort. To him may juſtly be applied thoſe well-known lines of our poet:

"Stateſman, yet friend to truth! of ſoul ſincere,
"In action faithful, and in honour clear;
"Who broke no promiſe, ſerv'd no private end;
"Who gained no *riches*, and who loſt no friend."

LET-

LETTER II.

PARIS, *April* 17, 1793.

LEWIS the ſixteenth had been offered up as a ſacrifice on the altar of equality, and the Mountain chiefs could no longer make his exiſtence a pretext for ſuſpicion, tumult, and inſurrection. Immediately after his fate was decided, a plan of conſtitution was preſented by the committee of legiſlation to the National Convention: and, as it would have been difficult to frame a ſyſtem of government more purely democratical, it was hoped, that even the Mountain would concur in its eſtabliſhment. But it was ſoon found that clouds and darkneſs ſtill hung upon the future. It was ſoon found that a few lines traced in black and white would little avail to control that fierce conflict of paſſions excited in this country, and which has ſince ariſen to its

moſt formidable height of turbulence and diſorder. An extenſive ſcheme of counter-revolution had been formed, in which, probably, the leaders of the Mountain acted as the auxiliaries of the ariſtocracy, though with ſuch different views that it formed but an ill-aſſorted alliance. The project of an inſurrection at Paris had been connected with that of an inſurrection in ſeveral of the departments; and it had been concerted, that, at the very moment when the capital became the ſcene of a maſſacre of the national repreſentatives, thoſe provinces were to raiſe the banner of revolt.

More than twenty thouſand emigrants had found means to return to Paris, many of whom were the immediate emiſſaries of the French princes, and of foreign courts. Theſe emigrants acquitted themſelves of their agency with zeal and activity: they contrived to glide

into the tribunes of the National Convention, into the popular ſocieties, the aſſemblies of the ſections, and the groups of the Tuilleries: they had aſſumed as many Protean forms as ſuited their purpoſe, and had acted with admirable addreſs the part of furious demagogues. Theſe ariſtocrats had, together with the chiefs of the party of the Mountain, carefully taught the people, that to exerciſe their ſovereignty, in the violation of laws which they found irkſome or diſagreeable, was an act of heroic virtue; that the pillage of monopoliſts was nothing more than the execution of ſummary juſtice; and that the partial inſurrection of a mob was no leſs glorious than the mighty inſurrection of the whole nation, when with one conſent it overthrew deſpotiſm, and aſſerted its juſt rights. As well might they have compared the ſun advancing in his majeſty, chaſing the peſtilential vapours from his orb,

orb, and ſpreading light over the horizon, to the angry and tranſient meteor which flaſhes acroſs the ſky, and which riſes and ſets in darkneſs. The exceſſive high price of ſugar furniſhed a pretence to put in practice the leſſon of ſedition which had thus been inculcated; and on the twenty-fifth of February a pillage took place in the ſhops of the grocers. The ariſtocrats hoped by this pillage to prevent the city of Paris from furniſhing twelve thouſand men, which it had engaged to do, towards recruiting the army: they hoped that the ſoldiers would haſten with leſs alacrity to the frontiers, when they were to leave their wives and their children to the mercy of enemies as ſavage as thoſe they were going to encounter. This conjecture was well founded; and the buſineſs of recruiting went on with languor. Meantime the returning ſpring had again put the armies of the continent in

movement, and the horrors of war were again renewed. The moral and natural world appeared at melancholy variance; and, while one unfolded the proſpect of beauty, harmony, and order, the other preſented a hideous perſpective of carnage and deſolation, a waſte of life at which humanity ſhudders.

On the eighth of March intelligence was received at Paris from the army, that the French troops had ſuſtained ſome loſs at Aix la Chapelle. The municipality of Paris immediately ordered the public places to be ſhut up, and called the citizens to their reſpective ſections; where the people without heſitation conſented to leave their occupations, their trades, and enliſted themſelves in the ſervice of their country with ſuch ardour, and in ſuch numbers, that, although the municipality had determined to furniſh twenty-four thouſand inſtead of twelve, they found themſelves

ſelves obliged to reſtrain the impetuous zeal of the people. Indignation at the check which the French arms had received ſerved to awaken a flame of freſh enthuſiaſm in the minds of the Pariſians.—Every man appeared to think that the fate of the republic depended on his valorous exertions: every man fancied himſelf a hero, and ſeemed ready—

"To dive into the bottom of the deep,
"Or ſnatch bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon."

And, in caſe of defeat and invaſion, the romantic project was formed of throwing aſide all arts, all commerce, all occupations but war, and of marching, if it were neceſſary, in a hundred columns compoſed of the whole French nation, to repel the attacks of its enemies.

While the ſections of Paris were tak-

ing meaſures to reinforce the armies of the republic, the emiſſaries of the ariſtocracy conſidered the preſent moment as too favourable to their deſigns to be loſt. On the evening of the ninth of March a ſtranger propoſed at the Jacobins, to go the next morning to the National Convention, where he invited the people in the tribunes to meet them, in order to rid the ſtate of its enemies—of the Briſſotins—the Rolandiſts—the Girondines, by whoſe conſpiracies the army had been betrayed and the ſoldiers ſlaughtered. The Jacobins, who have not only the fever of revolution burning in their veins, but the higheſt delirium of that fever, never reject an incendiary meaſure. This propoſition was ſufficiently combuſtible for thoſe fiery ſpirits: it roſe to what they call the elevation of their principles, and was accordingly adopted.

It

It is a melancholy truth, that the ſociety of Jacobins—that ſociety

" Whoſe mutual league,
" United thoughts and counſels, equal hope,
" And hazard in the glorious enterprize,
" Joined once,"—

are now endeavouring to cruſh in its birth that liberty which they contributed to create; and of which they were ſo long the jealous guardians.

During the night of the ninth, the aſſaſſins, who had prepared their plans of murder for the following day, determined not to remain idle. They went to ſeveral printing-houſes, where journals were publiſhed which preached liberty, but not inſurrection: ſome they deſtroyed; others, hearing of the fate of their fellow-labourers, prepared themſelves for defence, and drove the ruffians away. It ſeemed as if ſome principle of ſhame, or of remorſe, ſtill lurked in their boſoms; and that, in preparation

for the deſperate deeds of the following day, they wiſhed to prevent the poſſibility of recording their crimes.

On the morning of the tenth a watch-word was given to the ſentinels at the doors of the Convention by ſome perſons unknown, forbidding them to ſuffer any women to enter the tribunes of the aſſembly that day; becauſe, ſaid theſe perſons, we have an expedition to make, and men only muſt be admitted. The order was punctually executed: not one woman appeared in the galleries, which were filled with armed men.

On the evening of the tenth, ſome thouſands of armed perſons again aſſembled in the Champs Eliſées, on the terrace of the Feuillans, and crowds filled the hall of the Jacobins. It was propoſed to divide their forces. One party was to attack the Convention, and the other the members of the executive council. It was reſolved to ſhut the

gates of the city, to ring the tocſin, and then to march to the ſcene of action. Several circumſtances, however, concurred to prevent the perpetration of their horrid purpoſes. Some of thoſe members of the Convention who were marked as the firſt victims of the conſpiracy, were abſent. As the danger approached the chiefs of the Mountain began to tremble for their own perſonal ſafety; they began to apprehend that the oppoſite party would not ſuffer themſelves to be ſacrificed without reſiſtance, without aiming ſome blow at the leaders of the conſpiracy. Guilt is not always bold; and Roberſpierre had been warned, that, if any violence were attempted on the Gironde party, he ſhould be the firſt to fall. The commune of Paris, alſo, though ſufficiently ready for a maſſacre when they judge that meaſure to be expedient, believed it was then unneceſſary. But, what moſt effectually

diſconcerted the plan of inſurrection was, that the Fauxbourg St. Antoine refuſed to join in it.

In the progreſs of the French revolution we find the inhabitants of the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, who overthrew the towers of the Baſtille, and the Marſeillois, who beſieged and took the chateau of the Tuilleries, thoſe men who have atchieved the revolution, and whoſe ideas of liberty are ſo warm and glowing, that they may truly be ſaid to have—

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,"

are the men who have been foremoſt to ſhew their ſubmiſſion to the decrees of the repreſentatives of the people, and who have uniformly expreſſed no leſs abhorrence of anarchy than love of freedom. The inhabitants of the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, when called upon by the

Jacobins

Jacobins to lend their powerful arm to the meditated inſurrection, indignantly replied—"When we were in danger of being cruſhed by the deſpotiſm or the treachery of the court, inſurrection was neceſſary: but againſt whom are we now to riſe? Againſt the men whom we have choſen for our repreſentatives—No; when we diſapprove of their conduct, we will take from them the power we have delegated, but we will not ſtain our hands in their blood."

While theſe things were paſſing at Paris, ſome of the departments became the ſcenes of inſurrection. The deluded peaſants of Brittany, wrought up by their prieſts to the higheſt fervour of fanaticiſm, bearing the crucifix in their hands, and all the rage of ſuperſtitious frenzy in their hearts, devoted themſelves to death with that confidence which only religious enthuſiaſm, the moſt powerful ſentiment of the human

mind, can inſpire. When taken priſoners, they demanded but a few minutes to repeat a prayer, which would open to them the gates of Paradiſe; and they ſubmitted to the ſtroke of death with the tranſport of the martyr.

Mean-time Dumourier, he, on the phalanx of whoſe genius the nation repoſed its confidence; he, whoſe name was in itſelf an hoſt, proved faithleſs to his truſt; and, after the unfortunate battle of Nirvender, betrayed, and at length abandoned, his country.

The friend who favoured me with the account you have read of Dumourier's campaign, has written the hiſtory of his deſertion of the popular cauſe in a manner ſo clear and intereſting, that, inſtead of attempting to trace the event myſelf, which I ſhould do very imperfectly, I ſhall ſubjoin my friend's letter; and content myſelf with giving you a ſketch of Dumourier's character, which I have had

had ſome opportunities of knowing from perſons who have long lived with him in habits of intimacy.

The diſtinguiſhed abilities of Dumourier were well known to all Europe; and therefore, when he aſſumed the tone of a dictator; when he threw down his gauntlet at the National Convention, menaced that aſſembly with annihilation, and declared himſelf the lawgiver of his country, it was generally believed that he was too wiſe to have avowed his purpoſe, until he had ſecured at leaſt the probable means of effecting it. When his mandates were delivered at the Convention, all Paris concluded that he ſpoke as the organ of his army. It was believed that, warned by the example of La Fayette, who, when he invited his troops to enforce a ſyſtem of government which the voice of the people had overthrown, found himſelf ſuddenly deſerted, and compelled to ſeek his ſafety

in

in flight; Dumourier could not ſo far miſtake the ſpirit of his country, as to engage in a ſimilar enterpriſe, without having previouſly enſured ſucceſs. It requires a knowledge of the minuter traits of his character to account for his having caſt his high fortune upon ſo precarious a chance, for his having riſked what has actually happened, being forced to ſeek an aſylum with the enemies he had vanquiſhed; while all he can offer them is the equivocal, the ſuſpected ſervices of a traitor to his own country, and the auxiliary ſupport of a general without an army. He, who but a few months paſt was the terror of other nations, and the admiration of his own!

" _____ I have ſeen
" The dumb men throng to ſee him, and the blind
" To hear him ſpeak; the matrons flung their gloves,
" Ladies and maids their ſcarfs and handkerchiefs
" Upon him as he paſſed; the nobles bended

" As

" As to Jove's ſtatue, and the Commons made
" A ſhower and thunder with their caps and ſhouts:
" I never ſaw the like."

The extraordinary viciſſitudes of the French revolution had called Dumourier from a ſtation of life, in which he thought himſelf happy to be employed in a ſubordinate part of political negociations, to the higheſt military honours; and fortune had bound his brow with all the laurels of victory. But it is not the firſt time that fortune, by leading her favourites to the dangerous pinnacle of glory, has rendered their fall more conſpicuous. There are two leading traits in the character of Dumourier, the ſpirit of intrigue and of vanity.—He had been employed under the ancient government as an emiſſary in foreign courts, and had ſo much the habit of intrigue, that he practiſed it even on the moſt trifling occaſions. He loved to purſue his purpoſe, whatever it might be, by a winding

winding path, inſtead of walking towards it ſtraight forwards; and carried this propenſity to ſuch ridiculous exceſs that he reminded one of Young's fine lady:

"For her own breakfaſt ſhe'll project a ſcheme,
"Nor drink her tea without a ſtratagem."

At the ſame time his vanity, which was unbounded, was highly elated, not only by the brilliant ſucceſs of his arms, but by the reſpect with which he found himſelf treated by all the powers of Europe.

Foreign nations, while they refuſed to acknowledge the French republic, ſent their agents to his camp; and, while they diſdained to treat with the executive council of France, were anxious to negociate with its general. Dumourier had ſince the revolution adopted the faſhion of his country, and affected to deſpiſe ariſtocracy and monarchy; but thoſe who

who knew him intimately diſcerned, through the veil of philoſophy with which he had enveloped himſelf, an attachment, not ſo much to monarchical power, as to the tinſel and drapery of courts. He was not only covetous of great, but of little diſtinctions; and when, in his camp, ſurrounded by his general officers, he received that kind of homage which military ſubordination exacts, he is ſaid to have compared himſelf to Choiſeul amidſt the pomp of his crowded levee; and to have exulted no leſs in the accidental honours which belonged to his ſituation, than in thoſe which were the claim of his genius.

Though he poſſeſſed a great ſhare of underſtanding, he poſſeſſed not quite enough. "He was proud even to the altitude of his virtue;" and, while his pride was fed by the acclamations of Europe, his indignation was rouſed by the calumnies with which the faction of

of the Mountain had endeavoured to cloud the meridian ſplendour of his glory. Yes, it is one of the crimes of that deteſtable faction, that they have precipitated his fall, and been the cauſe of his perdition. They had long ſince declared, that the hero of Gemmappe had acquired victories only for the purpoſe of making himſelf popular, and of ſubverting the republic—they had perſecuted the deliverer of his country with denunciations—they had menaced him with the ſcaffold in recompenſe for his important ſervices—they had ſtung his haughty ſpirit almoſt to madneſs;—until at length, wounded by injuſtice, goaded by vengeance, impelled by ambition, he has betrayed the nation he had ſaved, and caſt an eternal ſhade over his honourable fame.

" ——————————— The benefit
" Which he ſhall thereby reap, is ſuch a name,
" Whoſe repetition ſhall be dogged with curſes,

" Whoſe

" Whoſe chronicle thus writ, " the man was noble;
" But with his laſt attempt he wip'd it out—
" *Betray'd* his country;—and his name remains
" To th' enſuing age abhor'd."

Although every perſon of ſenſe and integrity in France lamented the internal diſorders excited by the Mountain faction, yet no man choſe to receive laws impoſed by Dumourier at the head of a conquering army. This would have been flying from Scylla to Charybdis. The moſt determined republicans of France felt that the ſovereignty of a King was far leſs offenſive than the tyranny of a Cromwell; and, however wide were the different opinions which divided the French on other points, all were unanimous in regarding Dumourier as their common enemy. His army were ſtrongly attached to that general, who had led them to victory; but no ſooner did he declare his purpoſe, than he broke the ſpell by which his ſoldiers were

were bound to his fortunes, and ſuddenly found his crowded camp transformed into a deſert.

The deſertion of Dumourier, which appeared at firſt ſight to involve in it the ruin of his country, will probably produce ſome ſalutary effects: it will teach the faction of the Mountain, and the French nation in general, an uſeful leſſon. The Mountain-chiefs have diſcovered, that the people of Paris are not ſo abſolutely ſubjected to their will as they imagined; but, on the contrary, have diſplayed ſome ſymptoms of being wearied of the deſpotiſm of anarchy; ſince, at the moment when they believed Dumourier was approaching at the head of an hoſtile army, although Danton from the tribune of the National Convention preached the doctrine of inſurrection, and the maſſacre of thoſe he denominated the enemies of the people, that very people, after receiving the

the incendiary leſſon, calmly reſorted to their reſpective ſections, offered to march againſt the invaders, and in the mean time maintained the moſt perfect tranquillity and good order. The theatres continued open, the public walks were crowded, and no one could have gueſſed, from the general aſpect of the city, that it was menaced with invaſion. At the ſame time it has unfortunately happened, that the treaſon of Dumourier has raiſed the credit of Marat. That accuſing ſpirit, who employs life in one long denunciation of all that is eminent from ſtation, talents, or virtue, had accuſed every miniſter, every general, and every diſtinguiſhed legiſlator of the republic. If, therefore, corruption or treaſon ſhould any where be found, Marat was ſure to find it:

"Prophet of woe, and harbinger of ill."

He had accuſed La Fayette, and La Fayette

Fayette juſtified the prediction. He had pronounced Dumourier a traitor, and, alas! Dumourier has fulfilled the prediction! Can we then be ſurpriſed, that the lower claſſes of the people, the yet agitated multitude, are miſled by the voice of their prophet? Can we wonder that they are ſuſpicious, when they find themſelves ſo often betrayed? This is perhaps the moſt diſmal conſequence of the repeated treachery of thoſe entruſted with power, that it weakens in the people all belief in virtue.

With reſpect to Marat himſelf, his conduct is perfectly conſiſtent: he acts with all the wiſdom which can belong to villainy. Conſcious that not only his power muſt ceaſe with the eſtabliſhment of order, but that his crimes muſt be puniſhed, the law of ſelf-preſervation determines him to prolong the reign of anarchy. He feels like Macbeth, that he has ſtepped too far in crimes to re-

cede, and will rush on till his career terminates, as there is reason to believe it will, in his own destruction.—Nations, as well as individuals, may profit by adversity: the check which the French have received, the treason of their generals, and the ill success of their crusade in the Belgic provinces, may teach them, that their former abjuration of conquest was no less politic than philosophical; and they will probably relinquish for ever their Quixote expeditions in favour of liberty. They will no longer send forth their tutelar divinity, armed with the pike and the bayonet, prepared not to invite but to compel; not to convince, but to conquer. Instead of attempting to disorganize the systems of government which prevail in other countries, they will begin by organizing their own—and before they desire other nations to throw off the sovereignty of kings, they will be careful to demonstrate that there

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is no tyranny in the ſovereignty of the people.

Hitherto they have only proved to the world, that the paſſage from deſpotiſm to liberty is long and terrible—like the paſſage of Milton's Satan from hell to earth, when

" His ear was peal'd
" With noiſes loud and ruinous; — —
" — — — — as if this frame
" Of heav'n were falling, and theſe elements
" In mutiny had from her axle torn
" The ſtedfaſt earth."

When the French have paſſed the " wild abyſs," then will Europe diſcern and judge whether the produce of their new political creation be happineſs or miſery; whether the theory of equality can be reduced to practice, and receive " a local habitation and a name;" or whether it will prove a thought beyond the reaches of our ſouls, and melt away to airy nothing, while aboliſhed

privileges are renewed, and ſeparate the collected maſs of the people into diſtinct claſſes: whether, beneath the ſpecious ſemblance of freedom, the hideous monſter of anarchy ſhall continue to drag into day new crimes and unknown calamities; or whether liberty, uncontaminated, pure, exalted, and ſublime liberty, ſhall deſcend like the guardian genius of mankind, to regenerate the human race; to bind them together by the cords of peace and of good-will; to mould ſociety into a form of ſimple and beautiful proportions; to "illumine what is dark—what is low, raiſe and ſupport; that to the height of her great argument the nations may aſcend," and prove worthy of more perfect ſyſtems of legiſlation, and a wider ſphere of virtue and of happineſs!

Adieu.

LETTER III.

Paris, April 10.
Second Year of the Republic.

PLACED amidſt circumſtances where the great events that are paſſing ſucceed each other ſo rapidly, that it is almoſt as difficult to conſider them ſeparately, with attention, as it is impoſſible to calculate their effects, you impoſe a taſk on me which I am incapable of fulfilling: for ſo new and unexpected are they, and ſo little relation do they bear to the paſt, that it would be raſh to hazard any prediction of the future, from what we now behold.

The events of the laſt month have been in appearance ſo fatal to the republic, that without ſome conſideration,

one

one might be at a loſs to know how the ſtock of public calamity might have been increaſed; and ſo much the greater is it, that the cauſe of their misfortunes remains yet unacknowledged, whilſt mutual accuſation, diſtruſt, and ſuſpicion are aggravating the evil. Whatever have been the cauſes of this melancholy reverſe, the true and genuine friend of liberty will not be much dejected; for though tyrants and deſpotiſm will aſſuredly vaniſh before the light of reaſon, yet freedom and the people will be eternal. From an enemy it is lawful to hear the words of truth; and he who was deſtined to aſſiſt in the leſſon which the French have juſt received, has informed them, that though individuals often eſcape the vengeance of diſtributive juſtice, yet Providence takes too great care of the happineſs of the world, to ſuffer national crimes to paſs unpuniſhed. Whoever are the agents of deſpotiſm;

kings or ſenators, the exerciſe of it is always deteſtable; and whether freemen are compelled to be ſlaves, or an enſlaved people compelled, contrary to their habitudes, to be free, the compulſion is tyranny, though there may be a conſiderable diſtinction in the motives of the tyrants. The pernicious effects of individual deſpotiſm, under any name, on the happineſs and well-being of ſociety, have long been the theme, and juſtly ſo, of every declaimer on the happineſs which reſults from the government of the people; and when the people, by the means of well-organized agents, are the governors the event juſtifies the theme.

The United States, without any of thoſe inequalities of conditions which the governors of almoſt every other country think neceſſary for the exiſtence of ſociety, have ſhewn that it can exiſt much more wiſely and happily than with what they deem thoſe incumbrances;

and

and France, with ideas even more enlarged, and philoſophy more liberal, had the means placed in her hands, of extending this knowledge to the reſt of the world; but ſhe has, fortunately for the intereſts of other tyrants, miſtaken the means, and diſcovered that deſpotiſm may change its form, but that its nature is continually the ſame.

Irritated againſt theſe betrayers of the ſacred depoſit intruſted to their care, the friend of liberty, who regards it only as it becomes the inſtrument of happineſs and order, may not always make juſt allowances for the errors and crimes againſt it, into which the conſtituted powers of France have been led and compelled. Fortunately for its more extenſive influence by better means, ſhe has been driven by force to meaſure back all the ſteps ſhe advanced from the wiſe and rational ſyſtem, which in leſs proſperous times ſhe had preſcribed

herſelf; and this reverſe will be worth to her a thouſand homilies; for though ſhe has not uſed her proſperity well, it is to be hoped that adverſity will not ſmite her a ſecond time in vain. Whilſt her cauſe was juſt, ſhe triumphed; for no cauſe could be more juſt and honourable, than that which forced her to draw her ſword; and whilſt ſhe offered brotherhood and independence to the ſubjects of thoſe tyrants who had invaded her territory, ſhe acted generouſly and nobly; but when dazzled by the ſplendour of her victories, and confident in her own force, ſhe commanded where ſhe promiſed ſupport, and enſlaved where ſhe had offered independence—ſhe became the tyrant in her turn—and the friend of liberty, true to his principles, equally rejoices in her defeat.

Of defeat ſhe has received ſufficient to anſwer the purpoſes of chaſtiſement to thoſe who wiſh her repentance and reform;

reform; and humiliation enough to gratify any moderate wiſhes of enmity and revenge to thoſe who do not entirely wiſh her deſtruction.

A few months ſince, a ſhort ſpace of time raiſed her to a point, where her moſt ardent fancy, at the preceding moment, could ſcarcely have carried her: a ſhorter ſpace has brought her into circumſtances more dreadful than ſhe has ever yet experienced. Inſtead of liberty ſpreading her banners over every country in Europe, of which the independence of the adjoining ſtates and the deliverance of Holland, were to have been the auſpices; the French are once more compelled to ſeek refuge in their own fortified places, and protect themſelves again from the ravages of the invaders. Who, but the ardent mind, that, even againſt hope, remains convinced that no deſign formed againſt liberty can eventually proſper, but would

have conſidered himſelf as reading the laſt page of this romance of the republic, when he beheld the ſtate of deſolation which lately ſeemed to have overſpread it.

The diſgraceful abandonment of the fertile provinces, united, and about to be united, as integrant parts of the territory, with all the free eſtabliſhments formed, and the authorities they had conſtituted, left at the diſpoſal of their former deſpots, in whom mercy would now be a double virtue — the retreat from Holland, of whoſe conqueſt and alliance, according to the mode lately preſcribed, they had made themſelves ſecure — two conſecutive defeats in arranged battles, where, according to the general's report, the French ſoldiers were firſt cowards, and then became robbers—the deſertion of this general, and all that was brave in his army, to place himſelf with his troops under the pro-

protection of the enemy, whom he had heretofore fought and conquered—a civil war raging in the country, ſo formidable, that at one moment the ſucceſs of the diſaffected was more than poſſible—the miniſter who directed that department on which depended the ſafety of the republic, taken priſoner with the members of the legiſlative power, deputed for its greater ſecurity; and this laſt power, in almoſt all its parts, ſo divided and ferocious againſt each other, that it was become an object of contempt to the loweſt of the people. Add alſo, that to this revolted army, in whom the nation had repoſed its truſt, there were three or four other hoſtile armies, each of equal magnitude, ready to pour in their whole force on the country; whilſt three other formidable powers, hitherto neutral, had now joined in league, and armed in concert againſt it.

Such, at one moment, appeared the ſtate of France, and to this dreadful condition did ſhe ſeem reduced. We are too near the events to conſider them with coolneſs or impartiality; and if you liſten to the reports of others, there is ſuch a war of opinion, and indeed ſo great a contradiction as to facts, that it is impoſſible at preſent to trace any true or even probable hiſtory of the cauſes of ſuch an inundation of diſtreſs. If you aſk the men of the Mountain, they tell you, that the moderate party (for epithets of ordinary virtue, in theſe days of fury and effervescence, are names for crimes) are in league with the general who betrayed them, and ſecretly rejoice in the deſtruction of liberty. Theſe Moderés, in whom we perſonally know there exiſts as much honour, as high a ſpirit of freedom, as great extent of underſtanding, as ardent wiſhes for the happineſs of mankind, and indefatigable perſe-

perſeverance in labouring to effect it, as can dwell in the boſom of the pureſt patriotiſm, and who, if France is not deſtined to be loſt, will prove at length its ſaviours, are branded by theſe illuminated Jacobins as traitors and conſpirators againſt their country. Contempt, the refuge of great minds againſt calumny, was too paſſive an inſtrument in theſe times to ſhield them againſt the effect of ſuch imputations. Theſe Moderés have accepted the challenge, and anſwered the accuſation; and ſuch was the force of their reaſoning, the proofs of their innocence, and the conviction of thoſe before whom they pleaded, that they were fully acquitted in the minds of all who heard them. The exhibition which, in their own juſtification, they made of the conduct of their accuſers, afforded every moral evidence of their being guilty of the late outrages that have been committed in Paris, of

exciting the people to revolt and aſſaſſination; of being concerned with that faction which, by the means of thoſe diſorders, had hoped to effect an overthrow of the government, and raiſe a dictator on its ruins, of whoſe power they were to partake: and ſo ſtrong was the conviction in one inſtance, that the man who ſtands forth as the general denunciator, who is the abhorrence of the good, the terror of the weak, and the contempt of the wiſe, has been ordered by the Convention to be dragged to the bar of the formidable tribunal, which has lately been erected for the judgment of treaſonable crimes.

This vote of the Convention the Jacobins could not controul, though it was their preſident who was the victim! But Marat has fled for refuge to his cavern, to elude the hand of juſtice; and well would that patriot deſerve of his country, who ſhould roll againſt its entrance,

entrance, a ſtone which no force ſhould be able to remove, that ſociety might remain diſburthened of the monſter. His eventual triumph, both over law and juſtice, would be in the order of the day, ſince his aſſociates in crime are active and induſtrious; whilſt the members of the Convention are too divided, and obſerve ſo little ceremony in ſhewing it, that they had not only loſt confidence in each other, but appear alſo to have leſſened conſiderably that of the people. So conſcious are they of this defection, that the wiſeſt amongſt them have already moved for the change or diſſolution of the preſent Convention; and when ſome principles of the new conſtitution are eſtabliſhed, which are of the higheſt importance, it is not improbable but an appeal will be made to the nation, to conſtitute other powers, as the preſent ſeem incapable of defending the ſtate, or directing its concerns. If this ſe-

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natorial diſcord has been the means of deſolating the republic without, it has not had a leſs fatal effect in deranging it within. For, though we have not to complain of any horrors like thoſe of September; though, except in thoſe departments where a rebellion has been excited by prieſts and emigrants returned for that purpoſe, the moſt perfect tranquillity and good order are eſtabliſhed; though at Paris, the ordinary ſeat of all turbulence and diſorder, no one has fallen ſince the period juſt mentioned by the dagger of the aſſaſſin, except St. Fargeau, a deputy of the Mountain, who was murdered by a royaliſt; and though no open violence has taken place but a few hours outrage againſt monopoliſts, which was ſoon cruſhed by the magiſtrates; yet, in the conteſt which has enſued between the oppoſite parties, the one employed in ſecuring the power of which they were in poſſeſ-

ſion,

ſion, and the other in endeavouring to wreſt it from them, the concerns of the ſtate have been altogether neglected, except where it was likely to diſcover a new enemy; and no proviſion made for the day of difficulty, which they knew was approaching, and inevitable. If the hiſtory of the cloſe of the campaign, as contained in Dumourier's correſpondence with the miniſter of war, be genuine, we ſhall be leſs ſurpriſed at the events of the preſent moment; but we ſhall wonder at the gigantic folly of thoſe more immediately directing the affairs of the republic, who, whilſt they were ſuffering their army to remain in a ſtate of diſtreſs and miſery, ſo as to render them incapable of any farther progreſs againſt an enemy encamped before them, were iſſuing mandates in the form of decrees, not only offering freedom to the reſt of the world, but inſiſting on their acceptance of the proffered favour,

which this desolated army was commissioned to enforce. In the decree which was passed with fatal enthusiasm on the fifteenth of December, we find, written in characters now rendered perfectly legible, the origin of almost all those evils, to which a thoughtless effusion of the preceding month was the ill-omened preface.—Decrees which were so contrary to the great principles hitherto laid down, of seeking no addition of territory by conquest, but of soliciting only the alliance and friendship of all free men throughout all the world, awoke the vigilance of every other power, whose subjects were too weak to assert their privileges, or too habituated to the yoke to wish for any change. The exercise of this revolutionary power, as they named it, was so hostile to every other established authority in Europe, that it was not to be expected to remain without animadversion or attack. Formidable

midable leagues were of courſe combined againſt it: but, though the French ſubmitted to frequent explanations, yet they were too much elevated at this moment to grant the repeal. A variety of ill offices, which were more or leſs expreſſive of reſentment and hoſtile intentions, were manifeſted by the powers hitherto profeſſedly neutral; and the breach then opened was rendered ſtill wider by the unwiſe and unneceſſary ſeverity which they exerciſed towards the late king. The condemnation and puniſhment of this unhappy prince were the ſignals of attack. To theſe meaſures the Jacobin faction had precipitated thoſe of the aſſembly, whoſe opinions were more moderate, and whoſe purpoſes were leſs ferocious. Had theſe laſt known the effects which this ſanguinary act would have produced, not only on their foes, but on thoſe who thought in

moſt

moſt things alike with them, in other countries of Europe, they would have more firmly reſiſted the impetuoſity of this Mountain-torrent. There wanted but this act to fill up the meaſure of hatred; and England, with ſome confidence, could now declare its intentions. It was with the greateſt regret that France beheld us in the liſt of its foes, whilſt ſhe conſidered herſelf driven to the declaration; but the reluctance with which it was done appears not only from the previous correſpondence between the two ſtates, which is publiſhed by order of the Convention, but ſince, by the accuſations made againſt the diplomatic committee, where it was arranged, and by whom it was reported. It was done, they ſay, in order to eſtabliſh peace on a firmer baſis; and the invaſion of Holland, with a project of another kind, were intended to make a

revolution

revolution there, and force the Engliſh government to acknowledge the republic. Had it ſucceeded (and, whilſt Dumourier was within a few leagues of the Hague, it was not improbable), the objects they ſought might have been accompliſhed. At this point of elevation was France at this moment; and, not only the Convention, but almoſt every one, expected that the next diſpatches would be dated, as Dumouriet had promiſed they ſhould, from Amſterdam.

Whilſt Dumourier was marching thither, and the facility with which he carried their ſtrong places promiſed a ſpeedy termination to his journey, Miranda beſieged Maeſtricht, a ſtrong town belonging to Holland, on the Meuſe, which it was ſuppoſed would be readily ſurrendered. He had received inſtructions to throw only a few ſhells into the town, and then march on to

Nimeguen

Nimeguen with twenty-five or thirty thouſand men, leaving Maeſtricht and the Belgic ſtates to the care of the army of the Ardennes, of which Valence had the command. All theſe brilliant operations were, however, defeated by the advance of a conſiderable body of Auſtrian and Pruſſian troops on theſe armies, cantoned, in a moſt diſorderly and unmilitary direction, on an extent of nearly fifty miles, and in ſmall diviſions, ſo that they fell an eaſy prey to the enemy, which had its choice either to kill or capture. Dumourier's preſence did not prevent the progreſs of theſe troops, fluſhed with their firſt ſucceſs, who came up with him near Tirlemont, when he again gave battle, though he had ſcarcely two thirds of their force, and they were in poſſeſſion of all the advantages of ground and poſition. Dumourier ſtates that this was a victory torn

from

from him by the cowardice of the left wing, commanded by Miranda; but this general, whom I have frequently ſeen ſince his arrival in Paris, informs me, and has ſince made his declaration to the world, that, under the circumſtances of the French army, it was impoſſible to hope for ſucceſs; and that the immenſe numbers killed in his diviſion would vindicate their memory againſt the calumnies of a commander who had given battle ſo diſadvantageouſly, unneceſſarily, and againſt every principle of the art, and againſt which he was formally adviſed by Miranda, who previouſly ſhewed him the impoſſibility of ſucceſs. From Tirlemont the French retreated to Louvain, where another action enſued, which, though obſtinately fought, obliged the French to retreat farther. In theſe different actions the ſlaughter was great on both ſides. It ended, how-

ever, always to the diſadvantage of the retreating armies, who fell back towards Tournay and Mons, which were given up, on condition that the army in Holland ſhould paſs into France without interruption. And thus, in a few weeks, the Auſtrian commander has defeated three armies, forced another to capitulate, recovered the Low Countries, ſaved Holland, ſeduced the French generals, and placed himſelf on the frontiers of the republic.

The events that took place at this moment were not only ſingular in themſelves, but are about to bring to a rapid criſis the object of the preſent contention. As if it were not enough for France to have loſt all that ſhe had gained in the laſt campaign, with immenſe ſtores, amounting to ſome millions, together with the hopes of puſhing farther her victories and triumphs,

of

of which her heated fancy had imagined the acquiſition ſo eaſy; ſhe becomes incapable at once, not only of the means of farther enterpriſe, but almoſt even of the poſſibility of maintaining her original poſſeſſions. Dumourier's deſertion to the enemy was an event for which the French were not prepared. It had not come into any calculation of their misfortunes; and, though many intemperate men ſpoke of him with ſuſpicion, and his whole life appeared to have been a ſeries of intrigue; yet it entered into the imagination of no reaſonable being, that his reſentment would have puſhed him to any act of diſhonour or treaſon. Thoſe who are fond of looking for more cauſes than are neceſſary to explain the effects; and ſuch is the general character of the French, who are profound oftentimes when others are ſuperficial, and light when others are profound,

profound, assert, that his treason was the consequence of great deliberation, and connected with other plans of treachery and counter-revolution. As such they combine it with the insurrection in the western provinces, with the robberies in Paris in the latter days of February, and the intended assassination of the deputies on the tenth of March. These plans of counter revolution, if they were not insulated projects, appear to me at least unconnected with this later treason. The origin of Dumourier's discontent might be observed in his printed correspondence: but what has long appeared to me to be the true cause is now perfect conviction, since I have seen his confidential letters, communicating the plan of the then ensuing campaign, his sentiments of the parties and factions that were then dividing the Convention; and which he there predicted would prove its ruin.

In

In theſe letters the progreſs of his diſguſt is ſtrongly marked; and, though no apology is to be made for his treaſon, it would require a ſtronger mind than Dumourier's to have ſtood unmoved the perpetual mark for calumny to ſhoot at, or to ſerve a government, the machinery of which, he ſays, was directed "by ſuch leaders as Roberſpierre, Marat, and Co." Whilſt he was in Paris, the diſcontent which he expreſſes in his correſpondence from the Low Countries was heightened by what he ſaw; and ſo little more ſatisfaction was given to the miniſter of war by his preſence than his letters, that Pache endeavoured to ſeduce Miranda from Dumourier's friendſhip; and wrote him a letter, the meaning of which he underſtood to be the promotion of himſelf to the higheſt rank, if he would aſſiſt the Jacobin faction to get rid of Dumourier, who was become too proud or trouble-

ſome. This perfidious letter was made known to Dumourier, and ſerved to encreaſe his reſentment. It ended, however, in the diſmiſſion of Pache; and it was hoped that the nomination of Bournonville as his ſucceſſor would have remedied the numerous evils which this exceſſively weak or wicked miniſter had occaſioned. The Jacobins, true to their purpoſe, ſtill purſued him; and, when the defeat at Aix la Chapelle recalled him from Holland, and he found all was loſt for conqueſt, ſtung by diſappointment at the failure of his projects; hunted with implacable fury by theſe relentleſs aſſaſſins of peace and public order; driven to deſpair, in beholding, as he imagined, the liberties of his country ſeized on by theſe rapacious robbers, more deſtructive of its intereſts than Pruſſian or Auſtrian legions; he took counſel of the bad thoughts that had long been paſſing in his mind, and be-

came criminal from the exceſs of his impatience under calumny and misfortune. This treaſon, it ſeems, was concluded on in the very laſt days of his retreat, though he had meditated it ſome time before; ſince, in converſation with Miranda, he had frequently thrown out obſervations which not only were expreſſive of his rage at the factions, but alſo of his contempt for the nation itſelf.

To have heard theſe diſaffected diſcourſes without reply or animadverſion, would have been to partake in the guilt. Miranda ſays, that, when Dumourier came to them from Holland, he brought with him a new doctrine, which was altogether oppoſite to the ſentiments he had uſually expreſſed of reſpect at leaſt for liberty and republicaniſm. He appeared highly exaſperated againſt the National Convention; but this bad-humour Miranda attributed to the ill ſucceſs of

his undigeſted plans, which he had always oppoſed or corrected.

In a letter to the miniſter of war, dated the fourteenth of February, this general ſays, that the enterpriſe into Holland and the ſiege of Maeſtricht, which he was ordered to make, appeared to him "aſtoniſhing, and very difficult." "I hope, therefore, that, if the ſucceſs of the plan is not in conformity to our deſires and your hopes, that you will have for us the indulgence which an ardent zeal for the ſervice and glory of the country deſerves from a free nation," &c.

The warmth of Dumourier's temper, both in war and council, was often checked by the coolneſs and reflective diſpoſition of others; and he had the good ſenſe to attend to the wiſdom that corrected or reſtrained him. Finding, at length, that all the plans which he had

had formed were not only impoſſible to be executed, but were likely to involve the loſs of his army in Holland; and that "la ſeule preſtige de ſa perſonne," which his extravagant vanity had hitherto eſtimated as an hoſt, could operate nothing againſt the charm of a victorious enemy, who had to remedy the diſgrace of the late campaign, and regain an extenſive country which they had loſt; he threw aſide all reſerve, and wrote to the Convention a letter on the twelfth of March, full of reproach and invective, mixed indeed with ſome ſevere and wholeſome truths; but which, had it been permitted to be read, would have compelled the Convention to order him to the bar of the houſe. Of the arrival of this letter, if you remember, we were informed at the moment, and of the prudent reſolves of thoſe into whoſe hands it fell to ſuppreſs it: but Dumourier, who had long conceived that the

laſt virtues belonging to the Convention were caution or prudence, had publiſhed it in Brabant; but previouſly communicated its contents to Miranda, the day after he had ſent it to Paris, adding, that he ſhould not be ſurpriſed to ſee a decree of accuſation iſſued againſt him. From this time he began to ingratiate himſelf with the ſoldiers, ſhewing them the gazettes of the debates of the Jacobins, and enquiring what they thought of the ferocious denunciations againſt him. When it was repreſented how unjuſtifiable were ſuch attempts, and that the army had nothing to do with the private quarrels of individuals, he deſiſted from this kind of ſeduction; but, when the orders arrived for the arreſt of the two generals who commanded the advanced poſt at Aix la Chapelle, he took occaſion to aſk Miranda, whether, if ſuch an order were iſſued againſt him, he would put it in execution?—He anſwered,

ſwered, that, as a faithful ſervant, he ſhould be obliged to obey; but that this diſagreeable duty would not be impoſed on him, ſince General Valence was his ſuperior. It will come preciſely to you, added Dumourier; but the army will not obey it, ſo you have only to make a proces-verbal of it, and ſend it back. Afterwards at table he obſerved, "that it was abſolutely neceſſary to go to Paris to eſtabliſh liberty:" and, when he was aſked by what means? he anſwered, with the army; and what to do? to eſtabliſh liberty!—The remedy is worſe than the diſeaſe; and certainly I would hinder you if I could.—Then you would fight againſt me?—That is very poſſible, if you fight againſt liberty.—Very well, you would enact then Labienus.—Labienus or Cato, you will always find me on the ſide of the republic, &c.

There the converſation ended, which I give you as the firſt expreſſion of the

project he had conceived. Finding Miranda ill diſpoſed to ſecond his deſigns, and become a Cethegus, he became reſerved towards him, and attached himſelf with greater aſſiduity to cultivate the friendſhip of the two other commanders, with whom he frequently communicated, and who became at laſt his conſtant aſſociates. Of this Miranda took little notice; but, when Dumourier iſſued his proclamations, reflecting infamy and diſhonour on the troops, whilſt the error was all his own, he remonſtrated with him on the abſurdity and injuſtice of the charge; adding, that he would not ſuffer the nation to remain in ignorance, how and by whom ſo many brave men had been uſeleſsly ſacrificed; and that, on their arrival at Tournay, which would probably be the next day, he would aſk his permiſſion to go to Paris for a few days.—Dumourier had no objection to grant it; for he had then in his pocket a

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mandate of arreſt, or an order from the council calling Miranda to the bar of the Convention. After remonſtrating with Dumourier on the perfidy of his conduct, in ſuffering him to remain ignorant of this order for three days, during which a cannon-ſhot might have taken from him the means of juſtifying himſelf againſt the charges which were brought; for it was his conduct at Maeſtricht which had cauſed the order; he came to Paris, where, though he acquitted himſelf to the entire ſatisfaction of the committee, before whom he underwent a long examination; and, though expreſsly juſtified by the report made to the Convention, yet, according to the uſual inconſequence of their proceedings, he was ordered to take his trial at the bar of their new tribunal. But the committee of public ſafety and the executive council are ſo convinced of his innocence, that they

have not even put the ſeals on his papers, or himſelf under arreſt.

At Tournay the arrival of Jacobin commiſſaries brought the projects of Dumourier to their full maturity. All that paſſed, having been recorded in the Convention, becomes hiſtory. But great doubts remain whether theſe commiſſaries, who are, it ſeems, men of no great confidence, have related the whole, or more than the truth; ſince it is aſſerted, that their proces-verbal was arranged in Paris. The ſeizure of the members of the Convention and the miniſter of war at the camp of Maulde, and the delivery of them into the hands of the enemy—the ſubſequent deſertion of Dumourier, with the two other commanders, put the treaſon beyond all poſſibility of doubt; and even thoſe who felt with Dumourier the outrages he had received; who juſtified his reſentment, and who would have beheld, without much regret, an exemplary

puniſhment

puniſhment inflicted on the execrable anarchiſts, who had thus driven him to the border of treaſon, could not but expreſs their lively abhorrence of his crimes. But the part that Dumourier had to act was difficult. Had he reſigned the command when he entered the French territory, which he ought if diſguſted to have done, where could he have retired?—Not to Paris; for he conceived his head too precious, as he himſelf obſerves, to be carried to the ſcaffold; and there he ſuppoſed it would be borne, through the fury of an enraged populace, headed by infuriated Jacobins —not a ſolitary emigrant to the enemy, of whoſe perfidy La Fayette's melancholy hiſtory was an ill-omened preſage of what he had to expect from their mercy; and the hazard of paſſing into any neutral ſtate was too great to hope any probability of ſucceſs. He therefore formed the deſperate and diſhonourable plan of

making his deſertion to the enemy more acceptable by betraying his truſt to its very extent.—But his army, more virtuous than their chief, when they diſcovered his intention, refuſed to be accomplices in his crime. This was an event which Dumourier had not expected. Of the troops of the line he had thought himſelf ſecure; for he was too well acquainted with the rigid virtue of the volunteers to hope any thing from their aſſiſtance. To theſe laſt he had always of late given the poſt of danger; and, though many thouſands had lately fallen at their poſt, he had branded them all as cowards; whilſt others, who had eſcaped the honourable fate of their companions, he diſorganized, and then ſtigmatized to the Convention as robbers. His army, thus purged from patriotiſm, he thought fully equal to the criminality of his deſigns; and he expected, that, as Pompey, Cæſar, and

Anthony

Anthony had their different armies, when the republic or liberty was nothing at Rome; ſo he imagined that the ſoldiers he commanded would arrange themſelves under a chief, without paying any regard to the cauſe for which they fought, or the principles they were to ſacrifice. To the honour of human nature, and the triumph of the principles of liberty, he ſaw his army inſtantly diſband; whilſt a few regiments only remained ſharers in his guilt. And this was worth a thouſand victories: for what fear is there that a people can be enſlaved, when thoſe who have been in the habitude of offering their lives at the command of others, when ſucceſs was hopeleſs, and the utility of the ſacrifice doubtful, ſtart up with horror at the proſpect of diſhonour; and, though diſguſted with the treatment they had lately received in recompenſe of their ſervices,

vices, from the republic, fly to its cauſe as an aſylum from crime.

But, whilſt we contemplate this event in the hiſtory of the revolution with enthuſiaſm, we cannot help returning to the darker ſide of the ſcene, and tempering our admiration with profound reflexions on the inſtability of human things, when we ſee one general, lately covered with glory, the conqueror of formidable hoſts, and the ſhield of his country; to whom Europe looked up with wonder, and whoſe name alone was dreadful; now blinded by revenge, and ſeduced by ambition, betray the country which he had ſaved, and fly for protection to the enemies whom he had conquered—another, with the wounds yet bleeding which he had received in defence of the republic, unite his cauſe to that of the traitor—whilſt a third, the adopted child of the revolution, which

had

had dethroned his family, joins himſelf to the protectors of this family againſt the revolution, to which he owed his all; in whoſe cauſe he has already gathered ſo many laurels, and to whoſe ſervice he had ſolemnly conſecrated his life.

What were the motives that influenced theſe men to the commiſſion of deeds which the common conſent of all nations have marked with obloquy and diſgrace, it would be very difficult, notwithſtanding the danger of the exiſting circumſtances, to divine. Had it been demanded of me to name the man, where the pureſt principles of patriotiſm would have dictated the moſt virtuous conduct, and where the nobleſt ſacrifices would have been made to liberty; had it been the ſacrifice of country—of fortune—friends—of all that renders life agreeable or makes exiſtence a bleſſing—I ſhould not have heſitated, from the intimate and confidential intercourſe which I have had

had with this young man, to have placed all that I hold moſt valuable on his inflexible virtue; for I have witneſſed moments in his life when that virtue was put to the ſevereſt proof. Of the reaſons that influenced his conduct we are yet uncertain. In an evil hour ſeduced by Dumourier, and by a ſtratagem ſo baſe that as yet I dare not hazard the recital; taught to believe, as his intercepted letters prove, that the liberties of his country no longer exiſted; that anarchy and faction had deſtroyed the fair fabric which the revolution had reared; and that it might be an act of virtue to proceed to the extirpation of theſe uſurping and vulgar tyrants; without conſidering that the remedy was fatal, whilſt the diſeaſe could be but for a moment; and that, though violence might triumph for a ſeaſon, its reign muſt neceſſarily be ſhort: he ſuffered himſelf to be deprived of his honour and his fame.

Of

Of Dumourier, though I have long underſtood that his life has been a ſyſtem of intrigue, and vanity his ruling paſſion; yet I am perſuaded that the inceſſant denunciations of premeditated treaſons, hurled againſt him by the aſſaſſins of reputation at Paris, had no foundation in truth.—I mark in his correſpondence the progreſs of his crimes; and I believe, that, previouſly to the fatal event of Aix la Chapelle, though his ſoul was embittered by calumny and diſappointment, it was free from the actual intention of guilt. I will not diſſemble, that, before this event, whilſt he was yet in Paris, and planning the campaign, viewing the influence of thoſe unprincipled men, whoſe triumph became unbounded at the death of the king, "from which melancholy cataſtrophe," ſays Dumourier, "I date the whole world our enemy;" that, like the profligate mentioned by Valerius, "Peregrinatus

regrinatus eſt in nequitiâ." But his intention was not there to abide. When this correſpondence is publiſhed (which for prudential reaſons is delayed) it will appear to the world, that of this treaſon the deteſted faction of the Mountain and the Jacobins have been the original authors; and Dumourier will ſtand half acquitted to his injured country.

But of this man what can we at preſent decide? We are not, indeed, the impartial judges before whoſe tribunal he is to be brought. Poſterity will judge him more aright, and appreciate his motives and his crimes. Had he waited till this moment, he might have witneſſed his complete triumph, notwithſtanding his misfortunes, over the faction that has hunted him to his ruin; and might have contributed to ſecure the bleſſings of liberty to his country, on a baſis more firm and exalted than victory or foreign conqueſts. If prevented

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in his criminal deſign of marching to Paris, he failed in the probable engagement he has made with his new allies, who will regard him only as a traitor, when they ſee his impotence; and throw him by as uſeleſs, ſince no confidence can be repoſed—we may then mourn over the ruins of his greatneſs; but we cannot help exclaiming with the poet:

"Oh! loſt alike to action and repoſe,
"With all that habit of familiar fame!
"Sold to the mockery of relentleſs foes,
"And doom'd t' exhauſt the dregs of life in ſhame;
"To act, with burning brow and throbbing heart,
"A poor deſerter's dull exploded part;
"To ſlight the favour thou canſt hope no more,
"Renounce the giddy crowd, the vulgar wind;
"Charge thy own lightneſs on thy country's mind,
"And from her voice appeal to each tame foreign ſhore."

It is difficult to ſay what the conſequence of the preſent diſorganization will be. The troops who have taken the ſide of the republic are diſperſed in various

rious garriſons; and there ſeems to be no army at preſent to prevent the incurſions of the enemy. But, if one might judge from the tranquillity that reigns throughout the republic, and even in Paris, it would never be ſuppoſed that war was at their gates: and this tranquillity and order, though it now and then will be interrupted, ſhould ſerve to convince the enemy that the people of this country are invincible. The provinces, except where fanaticiſm had kindled the torch of civil diſcord, now nearly extinguiſhed, enjoy all the bleſſings that liberty can give; and it is only in great towns, from whence the intrigues of the old government are not yet baniſhed, and the different claſſes retain too many of their former prejudices to harmonize well together, that there is yet occaſional diſorder. Though the preſent oppoſition to the invading armies on the north be not yet very formidable, the depart-

ments

ments have in general furniſhed more than their contingent.

It is to be hoped that this union of ſentiment will have ſome influence on thoſe of the belligerent powers, and lead them to conſiderations of peace. But, whatever be the event of the preſent ſtruggles, the friends of liberty in France have little cauſe for dejection at this ſeeming reverſe. It was, indeed, wanting to bring them back to their original ſyſtem, from which the French have ſo unhappily ſtrayed. Their minds were yet too young in freedom to appreciate its bleſſings aright; and they were yet to know that the triumphs of liberty are ſcarcely ever thoſe of the ſword.

A new repreſentation will profit by the errors of the preſent; and, repealing thoſe decrees ſo hoſtile to the peace of other countries, may offer or accept terms of peace honourable to every party, and for the ſtability of which the principles

originally avowed by the French will ſerve as the baſis. The French will demand what is their undoubted right, the independence of the republic, and the power of arranging their own concerns; and they alſo have received a ſufficient leſſon to prevent them from ever mingling in the concerns of others. The evacuation of Holland and of Brabant takes from the Engliſh every pretence of war. The Pruſſian has repaired the diſhonour of his laſt campaign; and will not be anxious to add France an ally to Auſtria. This laſt power has nothing more to fear from the French attempting their revolutionary principles in the Low Countries, where ſuperſtition and ignorance are too deeply rooted, and ſaints and monkery too much adored to admit any better faith. Grown wiſe by experience, they will learn to eſtabliſh amongſt themſelves that order and harmony which is the beſt evidence of the

value

value of liberty; and will relax from thoſe ſevere and ſanguinary laws which have driven into exile, with the contemptible and the baſe, thoſe alſo who had no crime but error in judgment, and no treaſon but defect of courage or imbecility of mind. The provocation of the French to this abandonment of their principles was unqueſtionably great.—The Auſtrian was plotting their deſtruction with the court; and the Pruſſian had wantonly joined in the quarrel. Theſe came to eſtabliſh deſpotiſm in a ſtate that had become free: the French in return invaded their territories, to eſtabliſh liberty in ſtates that were enſlaved.—The events of the two laſt months have proved that both have miſcalculated; and with the parties the moſt intereſted the whole world has been undeceived.

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LETTER IV.

Paris, May 7,
Second Year of the Republic.

IT is not the leaſt ſingular circumſtance in this revolution, that when it has appeared near its cloſe, from the effects of the various treaſons to which it has been expoſed, the danger has produced an exertion not only ſufficient to counterbalance the evil intended, but excited a temporary ardour capable of triumphing over every ſeeming impoſſibility. It was thus that in the middle of September, when the fears and hopes of ſeeing the Pruſſians in Paris became general, the enemy having already attained half the way; that ſix weeks had not elapſed before the

the French were in poſſeſſion of Brabant. The republic ſeemed tottering from its baſe a few days ſince, when the general, and it was feared the army, had deſerted to the Auſtrians: the danger has again arouſed them, and ſcarcely will another month paſs by ere there appear a million of men in arms. This ardour ſinks into indifference when the danger is no longer preſſing; and when this indifference again brings them into danger, as it happened in their defeat, and expulſion from the Low Countries, the ardour is again renewed. Thoſe who are unacquainted with this part of their character would reaſonably ſuppoſe, that ſuch defeats and diſtreſſes would prove fatal; and I obſerve in the accounts given of the public opinion of other countries, that the winding up of this extraordinary drama is daily expected. But we flatter ourſelves too readily. As yet the ſtrong man has been bound only

"with green withes and new cords, and his hair woven with the web;" for we behold him aroused from his sleep only to shake his locks, each time becoming more invincible; and we have not yet had the address to find out where his real strength lies, which it seems we are only taking measures to increase. But let us suppose it discovered, though to me the secret is impenetrable, the comparison will hold even to the catastrophe: for if the present coalition of all the powers of Europe succeed, to betray or overwhelm the French, the principle cannot die; and at the appointed time, if the struggle should crush themselves with their tyrants, their country and children will be free. These events, however, seem highly improbable; for the numerous treasons of which they have so narrowly escaped being the victims, have not only given them a habit of ferocious caution, but inspired an enthu-

enthuſiaſtic courage, which always keeps pace with the magnitude of the danger.

France, according to the old calculation, numbers twenty-ſix millions of inhabitants; but from the data of Necker, the truth of which is acknowledged, Dr. Price's calculation raiſes them to thirty millions: of theſe a fifth part are capable of bearing arms; and, to entitle them to the privileges of active citizens, the law enjoins it. For the purpoſes of agriculture and manufactures, in which the women of this country are equally employed with the men, we will remit half the number of this fifth part, which leaves three millions of able and hardy warriors, fitted for any enterprize. Of theſe the danger of the country will ſoon call one million into actual ſervice, who will be placed in various parts of the republic, to await the foe, or invade their territories. If on the northern and eaſtern ſide, the Auſtrian, Hollander,

Heſſian, Pruſſian, and the tribes of German princes pour in their forces; there are three hundred thouſand men, and ſixty ſtrongly fortified places, and ſome apparently impregnable, to arreſt their progreſs. An army in the ſouth is purſuing the Sardinian troops on their own ſoil; while the Alps, the neutrality of the Swiſs, and another army, ſerve as barriers to other invaſions. If the whole force of Spain is brought to over-run the country adjacent to their own territory, as they are attempting; two armies and the Pyrenees are full ſecurities to any effectual hoſtilities on that ſide. If deſcents are intended by the naval powers; three armies, and none of theſe are Bayes's troops in ambuſh, are ſtationed along the coaſts in all poſſible places of attack; while two other armies, making the number thirteen, are placed in the center, to keep internal order, and ſerve as depots for recruitment and occaſional ſervice.

ſervice. If it were poſſible for them to act prudently, not a ſhip of the line ſhould ſtray beyond the harbour. This bulwark of our own country, the fleet, has a ſuperiority which ought to terrify, and joined by thoſe of other powers, which double the number, an attempt at competition would be madneſs: but this is no reaſon with the French why it ſhould not be attempted. When led to declare war againſt us, there was ſo much affected myſtery in the tranſaction, that any who did not know them would have concluded, that our commerce was annihilated, from the ſuppoſed immenſity of their preparations.

There was nothing, it ſeems, of which they thought leſs, if one may judge from the bureau of the marine; unleſs they dreamed, like Dumourier on ſome other occaſion, that the fleets and commerce of England would be deſtroyed—"Par la ſeule preſtige de leur perſonne." As

yet their hoſtilities againſt us have been ſo trivial, and unleſs roufed by ſome great calamity on that ſide, will continue ſo, that the merchant may walk the 'Change without much alarm, and the inſurer become wealthy. Under the torpid influence of their late calculating and mathematical miniſter, who had a modeſty at leaſt which few miniſters at this day poſſeſs, of confeſſing his inequality to the office, every thing that concerned the marine ſeemed to have acquired a retrograde motion. They tell us now of their formidable force; but they cannot be formidable againſt ſo vaſt a ſuperiority as ours, and naval ſkill ſo preeminent. I will grant much to enthuſiaſm; but the ſea is not the element for the diſplay of the enthuſiaſm of the preſent day; and if their plan be not differently arranged, nothing but defeat and diſaſter can attend them.

I ſcarcely

I ſcarcely know whether any of the more immediate directors of the republic are acquainted with marine affairs, or whether, from their previous habits and occupations, they can have had the ſlighteſt experience in naval concerns: but we know how ſmall a portion of knowledge is neceſſary to regulate the affairs of the world: and if one may judge from other circumſtances, they truſt much to accident and events; and it muſt be confeſſed that the preponderance hitherto has been greatly in their favour.

Of their land forces, though the diſcipline and ſkill be not equal to the enthuſiaſm, yet the military village amuſement for theſe four years paſt, has prepared them for more ſerious employment; and this is a point on which a friend to the independence of Europe would fix its attention. It is impoſſible for any government to arm its ſubjects as France has armed her citizens, becauſe

however mild the adminiſtration of that government might be, the poſſeſſion of ſo much power in the people would neceſſarily lead to its abuſe. If you increaſe the force you alſo increaſe the danger, like certain powers in phyſics—which become uſeleſs or fatal beyond their proper point. It becomes therefore dangerous, to ſay nothing of the expence, to arm the people, except in certain claſſes of the community: but it happens unfortunately, that thoſe whom it might be prudent and leſs hazardous to entruſt with power, are, from the nature of their attachment to the governments they live under, not the beſt fitted to give it much military protection. With France the caſe is different; ſhe calls on every citizen to arm, and where arms can be borne, implicit obedience to the law is required. Where nothing is to be gained by inſurrection, little is to be feared from any abuſe of this power; for

for where men are equal in their rights, the exercise of any authority not given by the people is the only thing to be resisted. The coalition of almost all the forces of Europe, against France, had at first a menacing and terrific aspect; but if there remain those who think that her cause is still the cause of liberty, they may rest satisfied, that she stands yet invincible against unjust and barbarous oppression.

Naturalists tell us, that the specific muscular force of a little animal, proverbial for its smallness and agility, is so many thousand times greater than that of a man, that, were it capable of attaining the same magnitude, its power would become irresistible. That power this country has at present the appearance of attaining. If the menace of the Prussian manifesto provoked the slight punishment of its inconsiderate framer, this combination of kings only serves to

awaken them to a greater exertion.—What was predicted is now verifying: the merchant is laying aſide his commerce and becoming the owner only of privateers; the proprietor and farmer, aſſiſted by recent decrees of the legiſlature, are carrying plenty to the markets; the citizen is preparing to march like a Roman ſoldier, not only with arms, but with his proviſion for a given time, and ſuch has already happened in a ſouthern department, an eighty-fifth part of the republic, where five millions of money, and, aſſiſted by their neighbours, forty thouſand men were raiſed in a few days, to repel an unexpected attack. Already is the great family of Frenchmen compoſing but one army, and France becoming but one vaſt camp, where the whole talk is of war, where every thing tends to war, where all labour, ſave that of neceſſary ſupplies for immediate exiſtence,

ence, has war for its ultimate object.—Already, by ſimple and frugal habits, have they begun to prepare themſelves for reverſes and misfortunes, and the act only of preparation will fortify their minds againſt any ſiniſter event. The hoſtile powers are but their maſters, training them to diſcipline by terror and threatenings; but of this theſe powers are not ſufficiently aware. A few months of actual ſervice, added to the preparation already made, makes a Frenchman a ſoldier! We have ſeen it in America!—The million now raiſed will not be the million of the next campaign; they will return to their homes, a part at leaſt, and be replaced by their brethren in arms. Whilſt this force is uſed for the purpoſes of ſelf-defence, Frenchmen, returned from the error into which they had been led, when tempted by ſucceſs to wander from principle, will find ad-

vocates in every generous mind; and as the "threatened cruſade of ruffian deſpots" (againſt which a celebrated writer aſſuredly unſuſpected of republican opinions has hurled the force of unparalleled eloquence and virtuous indignation) is not only attempted but actually put into execution, the intervening circumſtances of horror which criminate the nation only as they are yet unpuniſhed (for in thoſe atrocious deeds the nation had no concern), will not have changed that ſentiment which conſiders the preſent attack an "outrageous infringement on the laws of nations, and a ſavage conſpiracy againſt the written and unwritten rights of man."

But, if we might adventure in theſe eventful days to look beyond the preſent moment, and brave the ridicule of prophecy, "the black and lowering ſtorm which threatens ſoon to overſpread

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the face of all Europe, and overwhelm in one common ruin every looſe remnant and every faint veſtige of liberty," though it may conſtitute a new, will no longer form a tremendous ſpectacle.—However novel in theory and pernicious in practice may be the counſels of thoſe ſanguinary fanatics, who have unbluſhingly and unfeelingly provoked the unſparing ſword of foreign potentates, to point it, without any other end than tyranny, againſt the boſoms of Frenchmen," the reſiſtence to this tyranny will be as novel as the attack, and the eventual triumph over the invaders will be as ſignal as this projected proſcription.

It cannot be diſſembled, that, however diſguſted the inhabitants of other countries may be with French politics, the principles on which Frenchmen profeſs to act are received as ſpeculative truths

truths with nearly a general aſſent. If their late misfortunes have rendered them ſufficiently wiſe—if the conſtitution about to be framed reſtore internal order, and aſſure individual liberty and protection, which hangs at preſent on the looſe will of ſociety alone, the efforts of all Europe will not ſhake them from their purpoſe. The continuance of theſe efforts may, however, produce another effect, and preſent a ſpectacle equally new and tremendous to tyranny, as that which has lately menaced the cauſe of general freedom. If this ſtruggle continue long, Frenchmen will become ſtrong in proportion as their adverſaries become weak; and, loſing that habit of indulgence and luxury, which courts and ariſtocratical manners have produced amongſt them, they not only will become ſoldiers of defence, but ſoon grow into warriors of hardy attack. Without offending againſt the principles they have originally

ginally laid down, ſince an invaſion of an enemy's territory is but a defence of their own, thus forced into martial habits, they may become incapable of reſiſting the impulſe. Acting ſtill on the defenſive we may ſee them, like the northern nations in the ſixth century, overſpreading Europe; not in contemptible imitation of thoſe ferocious robbers, adding ſcraps of country to their own, in the ſilly ſpirit of puerile fraterniza-tion; but avenging their wrongs in the overthrow of their oppreſſors; and, after having taken the price of war, leave the ſubjects of the driven tyrants to return again under the yoke, or form an independent government for themſelves.

This may be a waking dream: but, if the princes were wiſe, they would ſeek a pretence for peace; and, by their removal from the territory, call on the French in the language of Anchiſes:

" Ne, pueri! ne tanta animis aſſueſcite bella!

Æneid. lib. vi.

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The friend of humanity indulges the hope, that this iron ſcourge of war may yet be ſuſpended. Conſiderations of amicable adjuſtment, they ſay, have already taken place. The Prince of Cobourg, like his predeceſſor the Duke of Brunſwick, has ſent before him his manifeſto in the form of propoſitions, but in a ſtyle altogether diſſimilar. To judge from this and a few other incidents, we may hope that the world is in a ſtate of improvement when it was leaſt expected. Brunſwick invaded, and La Fayette betrayed, eight months ſince, to overthrow the laſt conſtitution, becauſe it was too free. The prince of Cobourg and Dumourier invade and betray at preſent, to eſtabliſh that conſtitution, becauſe they judge it to be juſt free enough; and, if I am rightly informed, the laſt manifeſto which was received does not inſiſt on royalty making a component part; being unexceptionable in

moſt

moſt other points, but that which is of the firſt moment, namely, that France can never permit any foreign authority to mix in her internal concerns.

This acknowledgment of the right of the people to have formed that conſtitution (though it be conſidered of very trivial importance by Frenchmen whether the coaleſced powers acknowledge it or not) will ſurely provoke the ire of Mr. Burke, who conſiders the making or mending of conſtitutions as ſo dangerous an employment, that our forefathers, ſcared at the monument they had raiſed to freedom, in the revolution attempted a century ſince, vowed and ſwore, for themſelves and their children's children, according to this hiſtorian, never to undertake ſuch uncouth and peſtilential projects again. But if the orator, hearing of this conceſſion to rebels and regicides, ſhould liſt up his iron voice at the treaſon of Cobourg againſt "the rights of kings,"

kings," thus condeſcending to offer propoſitions to caitiffs who ſhould "be purſued only with the laſh of the beadle," like the revolted ſlaves of Syracuſe—What Deity can he invoke?—

Quiſquis erit ille Deorum?

Who ſhall give him the power of language or lungs for utterance, when he learns the deciſion of the chiefs united in the cauſe of royalty, againſt one whoſe claims on their protection, for her rank, as well as her misfortunes, ſhould have entitled her to every ſentiment of reſpect, and every feeling of humanity and pity? One does not look for much heroiſm, or even any conſiderable exertion of magnanimity from thoſe chiefs: the cauſe they have undertaken inſpires neither; and therefore it was very much in the order of the day at that time, in Brabant, to take all the advantages which traitors or treaſon could furniſh.

Accordingly

Accordingly the deputies of the Convention were delivered into the hands of the Auſtrians by Dumourier; and Cobourg ſent them priſoners to Maeſtricht. One does not enquire into the right of committing this offence againſt the law of nations. The morality or juſtice of the events that are taking place are no topics of conſideration; but it would have been ſome proof of Cobourg's ſincerity, when he proteſted his admiration of the French, and his ſolicitude for their friendſhip, to have given ſome evidence in refuſing to become an accomplice in this unlawful deed. Livy tells us, that, when the pedagogue of Feſcinium betrayed the ſons of the principal inhabitants into the power of Camillus, who was beſieging the place; the dictator, ſtruck with abhorrence at the treachery, ſent him back, ſtripped and bound, to the parents of thoſe boys, who were each furniſhed with rods to puniſh him

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in the conveyance. His generosity was not unrewarded. And had Cobourg acted thus, it might have been fatal to the liberty of France. But who would expect to find a Camillus in Cobourg *?

Several propositions had been made for the recovery of those commissaries; but none had succeeded. Some princes,

* Minellius, in his Commentary on the 12th ode of the first book of Horace, furnishes a single incident in which there is some co-incidence. I quote it for the singularity:—

"L. F. Camillus, Româ a Gallis Senonibus captâ, Gallis in auro appendendo jam occupatis, cum exercitu intervenit, eosque, sexto post Romam captam mense, ex Italiâ expulsit."

Thus translated:

"The Prince of Cobourg, when Brussels was taken by the fraternizing Frenchmen, who were in the act of shewing their brotherhood by robbing the churches and plundering the inhabitants, under the protection of commissaries of the Convention, came on them at Aix la Chapelle with his army, and drove them out of Brabant, after they had been in possession of Brussels nearly six months."

prisoners

priſoners of war, were ordered into ſtricter confinement as hoſtages; but princes are common in Germany, and their fate had little to intereſt the remainder of the caſt. The depot of deputies was thought too valuable to be thus cheapened; and the committee of public ſafety were of the ſame opinion; but, preſuming on the ſincerity of the attachment to royalty, for which the deſtruction of thouſands was then meditating, they imagined it might be conſidered as an equivalent, if they offered the queen in exchange for thoſe captives. I had little doubt, at the time the offer was made, but that it would have been thankfully accepted; and rejoiced that this unhappy woman was at length aſſured of her eſcape from the horrors which the Mountain ſavages had projected, and even prepared, at the fitted moment, to put into execution againſt her.

Alas!

Alas! not to France alone is the day of calculation peculiar—not only from this heretofore gallant country is the age of chivalry fled—If ſeventeen years ago "ten thouſand ſwords would have leapt from their ſcabbards to avenge a look of inſult offered to this morning ſtar, juſt lighting on the orb, full of life, and ſplendour and joy"—what, in the eſſence of chivalry collected from all nations, ought to have been the tranſport when it was propoſed, not with the ardour of courtly paſſion to fall proſtrate before this ſplendid luminary, but to mourn over it, ſhorn of its beams; not to revenge an imaginary look of inſult, but to relieve from deep and ſubſtantial diſtreſs; not to draw the fantaſtic ſword, but to ſtrike off the chains that had entered her ſoul! Oh! could the orator have ſearched the world around for his "nation of cavaliers," here would he have reſted his weary foot in ſurety—nor would it have entered

entered his imagination, that a queen of France could, even in theſe inglorious days, have been put into competition by them with Conventional miſſionaries —the country "curate," and the "endleſs promoter of village war and vexation," the provincial attorney? Nor would he ever dream of awakening from this delightful viſion, to contemplate it thus diſhonoured by ſuch vulgar uncouth realities. Theſe princes, on whom, abandoned by the reſt of the world, ſhe might have caſt an imploring eye with the hope of ſuccour; on whom ſhe had ſo many claims for aſſiſtance, from family connection and perſonal attachment, to ſay nothing of royal ſympathies, or the commendable ſpirit of chivalry, that one might have expected the cauſe of ſo illuſtrious a ſufferer would have revived amongſt them, have rejected this offer with the cool commercial contempt of tutored ſavages, who,

grown too wiſe to exchange their valuable commodities for the baubles and trinkets of European dealers, demand wares more like the real worth.

The committee have been diſappointed in this negociation. They knew, indeed, the value of the exchange on both ſides; but they did not ſuſpect that the princes were nearly as intelligent in this ſort of traffic as themſelves: for, though royalty may yet be in ſome eſtimation amongſt theſe chiefs, yet a queen, and probably the remains of the whole royal family, are not the price of a miniſter and four commiſſaries, taken from amidſt the plundering, confiſcating (I forget the orator's other epithets) democracy, pure then, even in his eyes, compared with the atrocious blazon of their newly committed crimes.

My intention in relating this anecdote was only to have noticed the change of opinion taking place in the world, with

reſpect to the progreſſive and relative value of theſe heretofore highly eſtimated objects, amongſt thoſe even who ſtand forth their avowed defenders. It cannot be ſuſpected, that, in bringing to your remembrance any of Mr. Burke's extravagancies, I meant to reflect with the ſlighteſt irreverence on misfortune; to which, indeed, the poſſeſſion of all Mr. Burke's wit and eloquence (and no one has ever deemed more highly of them than myſelf) would never tempt me: but who can help lamenting that his romance on the French revolution ſhould have been productive of ſo wide an evil? It may flatter the vanity of this fanciful writer, to know that his work has been ſtudied by queens, and kings, and princes, and cavaliers; but this vanity will be tempered with ſome ſlight remorſe, when he is aſſured that he is often curſed by theſe deluded victims, as one amongſt the authors of

their misfortunes. To have injured the cauſe he meant to defend was not in his intention: yet ſuch unhappily has been the effect, which I do not ſtate from idle report, ſince many in the unfortunate claſs of ſufferers from the ſavage laws of national baniſhment, have given me repeated inſtances of the deluſion. Of this deluſion I have myſelf too often witneſſed the fatal conſequences; and my heart has not been ſo ſteeled with democracy, but that I have hazarded much in defence of theſe unhappy exiles. When I contemplate this crowd of individual diſtreſſes, the proſpect of the better age ſeems too much dimmed, ſurveyed through this thick atmoſphere of evil, to offer much delight; and one ſickens at the maſs of intermediate calamity, though one has the aſſurance of the philoſophic poet*, peculiarly applicable to the preſent

* Μεγαλης, μιν ιδυσα, νυς δαιατυς,

Πολλα

ſent circumſtances; and that alſo of authority which cannot err, that evil as well as good is of divine original, and permitted only for the wiſeſt deſigns.

The laſt example I have to offer is alſo intereſting to Mr. Burke, as it reſpects the "Majeſty of the Church."—A century ago the ſpirit of perſecution drove from France multitudes of its beſt and moſt induſtrious inhabitants, the Proteſtants; as the ſame ſpirit of fanaticiſm lately diſcovered in England by "the ſavages of Birmingham," againſt the beſt informed and moſt valuable of its citizens, the Diſſenters, is likely to promote from thence a ſimilar emigration.

In the hiſtory of the revocation of the edict of Nantz, every one remembers the arguments which were urged to

Πολλα δι πημαται, καινοπαθη
Κ'ουδεν τουτων, οτι μη Ζευς.

Sophocl. I believe the Trachiniæ.

obtain it, and the pious exhortations of the reverend confeſſor who was moſt inſtrumental to procure and enforce it. All the leading events of that unhappy and deſolating period ruſhed on my mind a few days ſince, from the ſingular contraſt of the ſcene then before me. The Biſhop of Calvados was in the honourable liſt of thoſe proſcribed in the inſolent petition of the Commune of Paris. In a ſpeech full of wit and eloquence he cleared himſelf, to the conviction of his accuſers, from the charges brought againſt him; one of which, it ſeems, was the exceſs of his piety, if one may judge from the ſtyle of his defence. The biſhop thought himſelf obliged to offer ſome apology for his faith. And, though Mr. Burke well knows, notwithſtanding his lamentations over the fallen honours of the Church, that one hundred and fifty one millions of livres are paid annually to thoſe who were and are yet concerned in its

its ſupport, it would have grieved him ſore to have witneſſed an inſtance of ſuch degradation as that of a Catholic biſhop apologizing for his belief, in a country lately ſo Chriſtian, and before the preſident of the ſupreme power in Church and State, who happened to be at that time M. La Source, a Proteſtant prieſt.

The Convention at this time ſtruck out from their Bill of Rights the article which ſanctioned public worſhip, and from motives the moſt reverend, for they begin to underſtand the queſtion. National faith is near its cloſe, ſo far as it is national. It will firſt dwindle into adminiſtrative and municipal regulation; and it will not be long from thence ere religion will riſe to its native dignity, and find ſupport in the energy of its maxims, and the evidence of its truths, from the voluntary protection of an enlightened people; who will acknow-

ledge it as the firmeſt baſis whereon to build their preſent and future hopes.

Releaſed from the fopperies and corruptions of the church, its tenets then ſhall be no longer removed from the apprehenſions or belief of its votaries, as the philoſophic and infidel hiſtorian has aſſerted of our own eſtabliſhment, the articles of whoſe faith he repreſents as yet in this ſtate of removal, though ſubſcribed by their more immediate defenders, with either a ſigh or a ſmile: for the approval of moſt of the principles of this revolution does not imply an approbation of the means by which they are always carried into effect. It is to be lamented that the principle and the execution are ſometimes at variance; yet we are not to condemn the one for the defect of the other. Principles are eternal: circumſtances only change.—The good will remain written in braſs—the evil will evaporate like water. Ignorance and

paſſion

paſſion will deny the exiſtence of any poſſible good; but the denial proves it only to be that of ignorance or paſſion. When we talk to them of the equal protection given to every member of ſociety by the laws, they ſhew us the liſt of emigrant nobility, whoſe former habits not brooking ſuch equality, have forced them into guilty or voluntary exile.—If we ſpeak to them of the people aſſuming their rights, and, by means of repreſentation, laying the baſis of a free government, they, like Anthony, "ſhake before our eyes the bloody robe;" and, though we cannot be forced into an approval of tyranny or treaſon, the exhibition melts us into tears. Like them we ſtart back with horror at the ſavage Septembriots, and imprecate curſes on their heads. Like them we deteſt the tyranny, and mock the ſilly menace of forcing the world to be free: but do they, with us, feel the ſame horror at the

firſt German manifeſtoes, threatening what theſe others executed; or make due apology for the ambitious reſentment of an injured people, who, under the guiſe of philoſophy and the ſoft title of affiliation, were running headlong into the tyranny they condemned? Their triumphs would be ſhort did they ſee how our hearts are torn with anguiſh at ſcenes where they only affect ſorrow; and they would be diſappointed in their purpoſe of inflicting pain, did they know how every true friend of liberty, and the rational principles of the French revolution, partake in their joy, though on grounds widely different, in the effects of the late defeat. Were the tree of liberty planted in France to be torn up by the roots, it has flouriſhed too long not to ſhake over other countries in the violence of its fall the precious ſeeds it already bears. The inceſſant watchfulneſs of the cultivator to keep from it

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the wild boars that would root it up, and to frighten away the eagles that would tear its branches, has forced him into a temporary neglect of its growth. Theſe ill-omened birds have aſſiſted, though with no friendly beak, to crop thoſe ſprouts, treſpaſſing on foreign ſoil, to which they afforded neither fruit nor ſhade, but which have prevented the neceſſary ſupply of both within; from whence, if it be pruned and cultivated aright, the gentle winds of heaven will waft over every country its ripened produce; and, though this may for a time "fall amongſt thorns, and in ſtony places, and the fowls of the air may devour it," yet it will certainly at length find every where "the good ground fitted to receive it; and its produce will be ſixty and a hundred fold."

If freedom be a bleſſing, it muſt be known by its fruits; for where tumult and anarchy continue to deform, the

ſilent hut of deſpotiſm will be deemed the more pleaſant abode. But where equal laws, wiſe inſtruction, rational faith, and virtuous conduct, conſtitute order and happineſs, all mankind will become worſhippers in the Temple of Liberty; whoſe corners will extend to the fartheſt ends of the earth, and whoſe arch will be the vault of Heaven.

LETTER V.

PARIS, March 1793.

MADAM,

TO do juſtice to the ſubject of our late converſation, to trace the progreſs of ſo vaſt an event as the French revolution, and to account for the erroneous opinions in England reſpecting it, is a taſk to which I am very unequal at preſent. But if a few haſty remarks on theſe points ſhall be acceptable to you, it will give me pleaſure to have written them.

With the opinions of other nations I ſhall not interfere; I ſhall confine myſelf to our own country. It was ſurely natural to have ſuppoſed, that a free people would have rejoiced in the freedom

of others. It could not have been imagined, that thoſe who had themſelves made a long and ſevere ſtruggle for liberty, would have looked with an evil eye on the efforts of another nation to obtain that ſame valuable bleſſing: yet the reverſe of this has happened! The revolution of France was from the beginning viewed in a dubious light in England: as it advanced farther, it became more diſliked; and in its latter ſtages, it has been the object of the higheſt diſguſt and execration!

I do not ſpeak of the opinions of certain unprincipled ſtateſmen, who regard with pain the proſperity of ſurrounding nations; and who, in their own, as well as in other countries, are hoſtile to whatever contributes to the advantage of the people. Their ſyſtem has always been, to keep the people in ignorance and debaſement, that they might have an apology for denying them

them power, in the argument that they were unfit to be truſted with it. I do not ſpeak of the lower and ignorant claſs of the people, whoſe minds have never been elevated above the old abſurd prejudices againſt Frenchmen, whom they regard as their *natural enemies*. Nor do I ſpeak of the preſent moment, when the two nations are at war: for on ſuch occaſions the paſſions are excited, and a nation, like an individual, though not ſure of being altogether in the right, yet, when attacked, will looſe its temper, and abuſe its opponent. My remarks ſhall be confined to the period preceding hoſtilities, and will refer chiefly to the middling, that is, to the moſt diſintereſted and the moſt judicious claſs of ſociety.

The HISTORY of the French revolution may be given in a few paragraphs—public abuſes were too great, and too inveterate to be remedied by a gradual

reform.

reform. A *revolution* was neceſſary, and in order to bring it about, it was requiſite to appeal to the power of the great body of the people. This appeal was made: the people roſe in general inſurrection, and deſtroyed the Baſtille! The deſtruction of abuſes followed of courſe. A CONSTITUTION was formed, not ſurely the beſt poſſible, but the beſt that the circumſtances permitted. The great majority of the nation received it with perfect approbation, and the very few enlightened men, who would have preferred a republic, ſaw ſo little hope of obtaining it, or of its being permanent when obtained, that they acquieſced in the general opinion, and reſolved to wait with patience, till the gradual progreſs of light and information ſhould prepare the nation for the complete triumph of principles over prejudice.

Mr. de la Rochfoucauld ſaid to me, "I have no doubt that a republic is the

"moſt

"most perfect form of government, but "I do not think it would be suitable to "France. We are too corrupt to be re- "publicans. I doubt even whether you "in England have virtue enough for "it. America is the country for re- "publicanism." This idea was not peculiar to Mr. de la Rochfoucauld. Others conceived the minds of the people not to be yet ripe for a republic; and, on the whole, there was a perfect acquiescence in the limited monarchy, formed by the Constituent Assembly.

I wish particularly to direct your attention to this fact, that you may be enabled to judge who were the authors of all the troubles and confusion, that have followed the period of unanimity and peace now described. I shall therefore beg leave to produce a few farther proofs of the decided attachment that reigned amongst all ranks of men to the principles then adopted, and which formed

the

the baſis of the conſtitution completed in 1791.

So univerſal was the public opinion in favour of the monarchical ſyſtem, that even when the flight of the king offered the faireſt opportunity of eſtabliſhing a republic; when Briſſot contended at the Jacobins, *that the king ought to be tried* * —when Condorcet argued,

* Thoſe who declared that the king ought to be *tried*, did not therefore pronounce that he ought to be *condemned*. That was the queſtion to be examined. But they argued, that his *inviolability* could not exempt him from a trial.

1. Becauſe the *inviolability* of the monarch is inſeparably connected with the *reſponſibility* of his miniſters. In every caſe there muſt be ſome one reſponſible to the nation; otherwiſe there is no liberty, and the government is a deſpotiſm. In the caſe now alluded to, the king acted in a public capacity, of his own accord, and without the knowledge of his miniſters. He was therefore liable to be called to account for his conduct like any other public officer.

2. The

argued, in oppoſition to a common prejudice, that a great and extenſive nation was not unfit for the republican form of government—when Thomas Paine and Achille du Chatelet formed a republican ſociety, and began a journal under the title of *Le Republicain*—when, beſides all this, the popular ſocieties and the patriots, who influenced the public mind in every part of France, waited with anxiety for the deciſion of the Aſſembly, and were prepared by the circumſtances to have acquieſced in it, even had it announced the inſtant abolition of monarchy! the French legiſlators pardoned the fugitive prince

2. The *inviolability* granted to the king could not be intended but for the protection of the conſtitution, and was therefore to be limited to that object. The king was inviolable in executing the conſtitution, but not in endeavouring to deſtroy it. No conſtitution can grant to any of its members a power to deſtroy itſelf: the very idea of ſuch a thing is an abſurdity!

without

without a trial, and preſerved the monarchy.

I was then in Paris, and I aſked ſeveral people what they thought of the conduct of the Aſſembly. The ſudden change of Barnave and others, from violent democracy to royalty, they allowed to be ſomewhat ſtrange; but they appeared to be pleaſed with it, and acquieſced heartily in their proceedings! "The French," ſaid a perſon to me, "cannot do without a king. We have "been too long accuſtomed to have one, "and we muſt have one ſtill, even if he "were made of wood!"—Had any one replied "But this inefficient man "coſts you ſo dear"—they would have anſwered, "True, but we muſt have "him to fill the place and keep out in-"triguers!" Such ideas were ſo univerſal, that thoſe who had manifeſted any approbation of republicaniſm fell into

into diſrepute, and at length were reduced to total ſilence. The moſt enlightened of them, as I have already ſtated, Condorcet, Briſſot, &c. gave up all hopes of the new ſyſtem; and reſolved to wait till the time appointed for the reviſion of the conſtitution, when they preſumed the progreſs of reaſon and information would have prepared the public mind for farther changes.

The conſtitution was completed, and accepted by the king. Thus far all was well; and the greateſt revolution the world had ever ſeen was to all appearance concluded with the ſmalleſt quantity of attending evil. You will remember, that at this period Mr. Burke's declamations about the evils of the French revolution had loſt all credit.—Nobody pretended to juſtify them—Ah! had that revolution ceaſed there, or advanced forward afterwards only by the ſlow and peaceful progreſs of gentle reform,

reform, how happy would it have been for France, how ſalutary for Europe! But, alas! this *golden age* of the French revolution was of ſhort duration!

It was a great error in the Conſtituent Aſſembly (ſuppoſing it poſſible for them to have avoided it) to have allotted the king ſo immenſe a ſalary as a million and a half ſterling a year. Such a ſum in France was enormous, and the poſſeſſion of it put it always in the power of an able prince to corrupt the legiſlative body. The ariſtocratic party at the court of Louis the ſixteenth, determined to profit by this circumſtance, and they well knew, that the very exiſtence of ſuch a civil liſt would, by whetting expectation, without the actual miſuſe of it, ſerve as a powerful engine in favour of royalty. This party had oſtenſibly acquieſced in the conſtitution: the circumſtances required this ſacrifice of them, but they had ſecretly determined

on

on the deſtruction of it. To effectuate this, they kept up a connection with the emigrant princes, and uſed all their influence with the king, who being of a character too feeble to be invariably honeſt, though generally well-meaning, and too weak to be out of the reach of deception, though not entirely without underſtanding—partly a deceiver, but much more a dupe, was the fitteſt of all agents to forward their purpuſes.

Mean while, ſome of their manoeuvres tranſpired from time to time, and occaſioned great fermentation amongſt a people jealous to diſtraction of their newly-acquired liberty. The republican party became convinced, that even the half-victory which principle had gained over prejudice in the conſtitution of 1791 would be loſt; and intelligent men became generally perſuaded, that the preſervation of a ſyſtem of *real* freedom was incompatible with the exiſtence of a king

king poſſeſſed of vaſt power, and a civil liſt of near a million and a half ſterling a year. Three parties now agitated the ſtate, that of the *Conſtitutionaliſts*, who ſtill hoped that the ſyſtem formed in 1791 would anſwer—they were the the moſt numerous: that of the *Courtiers*, who wiſhed to bring back the old ſyſtem —they were the moſt opulent and artful: and that of the *Republicans*, who were neither powerful nor wealthy.

Theſe parties kept up an inceſſant ſtruggle; and it was ſtill greater in reality than in appearance. It was a real civil war, without the name. The republicans exerted every nerve to diminiſh the power of the monarch, which experience indeed had proved to be dangerous and alarming. The courtiers profited by this circumſtance, to perſuade a weak prince, that there was a ſettled deſign to deſtroy the monarchy. As I do not mean to enter into details,

I for-

I forbear to mention a multitude of circumſtances that might be alleged in proof of theſe aſſertions, and haſten on to my concluſion.

War was declared againſt Auſtria and Pruſſia; and the republican party, to protect the capital which was threatened, and partly to guard againſt the deſigns of the court, obtained a decree for eſtabliſhing near Paris an army of 20,000 men. The king refuſed to ſanction it; oppoſed his veto alſo to the decree againſt the prieſts, and finally diſmiſſed the patriotic miniſters, Roland, Claviere, and Servan. The war became now open and avowed: the people broke into the Tuilleries on the 20th of June. On the 28th La Fayette, who had quitted his army, came to Paris to declare againſt the Jacobins. Towards the end of July the Marſeillois arrived.—They had been firſt invited to concur in the ceremony of the

fœderation; but the principal object of their journey was doubtleſs to ſupport the patriots againſt the court.—A report having been ſpread, that a plot was formed to attack the palace, the royaliſts collected; and the king, who but a little before had declared that he wanted no guard but his people, but who, nevertheleſs, had ſtill kept the Swiſs guards about him, in oppoſition both to the conſtitution and to an expreſs decree of the Aſſembly, ſuffered himſelf now to be ſurrounded farther with troops of armed men.

The people viewed theſe proceedings with extreme diſcontent. A new report was ſpread, and gained credit, that an attack was meditated on the National Convention by the Court; that the principal patriots in Paris were to be ſacrificed—liſts of proſcription were handed about: the combat became mortal, as

Petion

Petion ſays, between the people and the court—"one or other of them muſt fall!"—The people roſe in inſurrection the 10th of Auguſt, and menaced the palace—the guards fired on them! a fierce battle enſued, which terminated in the ruin of the monarchy, the captivity of the king, and the eſtabliſhment of the republic.

Theſe events appeared ſo extraordinary to us in England, that at firſt we did not know what to think of them; and for a long time our opinion was unfavourable. But when circumſtances were better known, when the treachery of the court was more fully developed, and when we found men of reſpectability and worth, ſuch as Garat, Rabaud, &c. declaring their complete adherence to the new ſyſtem, and their perfect conviction that the revolution of the 10th of Auguſt was as neceſſary as that of the 14th of July; we acquieſced in their

opinion, and recognized a republic, to which, not republicans by their efforts, but courtiers by their inſincerity, had given exiſtence.

This SECOND inſurrection had, however, an effect which was not foreſeen at the time, but which has been ſeverely felt ſince. It ſet the minds of the people afloat, after they had been completely tranquilliſed; and augmented their natural ſuſpicion of their governors, to a degree almoſt incompatible with the exiſtence of government.

It is eaſy to ſee how this came about. When the people were called upon to deliver themſelves from their tyrants, and eſtabliſh in their place legal governors, their duty was clear: nothing was wanting but an adequate force—the object was ſimple and ſpeedily accompliſhed. Here the *revolutionary power* of the people ſhould have ceaſed, and here it would have ceaſed, but for the

treachery

treachery of the court! The Baſtille was deſtroyed—the old deſpotiſm overthrown—the rights of man declared, and a conſtitution formed. The people were ſatisfied, ſo ſatisfied that, as I have already mentioned, thoſe who wiſhed to carry improvements farther, inſtead of receiving the thanks of their fellow-citizens, were blamed and traduced*. Much has been ſaid ſince the time of Rouſſeau, reſpecting "the *Social Contract*." Here was a complete example of one: a fair bargain was entered into between the nation and the court (I do not ſay the *king*, becauſe his total want of character renders it impoſſible to know when he acted from himſelf and when from the impulſe of others): the firſt was ſincere, and

* Briſſot, ſpeaking of 1791, ſays, that even then the Jacobins trembled at the name of republicaniſm—and Roberſpierre defended himſelf againſt the imputation. Diſcours, Oct. 24, 1792.

would have kept its word; the laſt was deceitful, and by its deceit became the author of a SECOND REVOLUTION!

This ſecond revolution coſt much to bring it about: it was a ſevere effort.—The Jacobins, inflexible friends of the people, called loudly for it, long before it took place, and, as it often happens to popular aſſemblies, ſomewhat imprudently and rudely. Many of the conſtitutionaliſts, on the other hand, ill informed as to the deſigns of the court, alarmed at the violence of the Jacobins, and fearing that the portion of liberty which they had already attained might be loſt in the dangerous effort to obtain more, abandoned the cauſe of the people, and became in a more or leſs degree royaliſts. Of this number was La Fayette, whom the exaggeration of ideas here has converted into the blackeſt of traitors, but whoſe conduct I think may be perfectly well explained without the ſuſpicion of

ill intention; or who, at the utmoſt, I think, from the perſonal knowledge I have had of his integrity and love of liberty, could only have been the dupe of deſigning men around him, who induced him to co-operate with them on pretences totally different from their real views.

From theſe circumſtances, you ſee, Madam, how it happened, that the people, who had originally only to decide between the ſupporters of the old ſyſtem, their avowed enemies, and the promoters of the new, their avowed friends; were now called to the difficult taſk of deciding between different claſſes of men, who equally profeſſed attachment to their intereſt, and only differed in the mode of promoting it. This was an affair infinitely complicated, and to which their intelligence was totally unequal. What was, in ſuch a caſe, to be ex-

pected? exactly that which has happened. Firſt, they began to attach themſelves in preference to perſons in the loweſt claſſes of life. This was natural, for we are all inclined to place moſt confidence in thoſe of our own ſtation. Indeed, there are but few of the ſuperior ranks, under the old governments of Europe, who feel ſufficiently the dignity of MAN, and the comparative triviality of his artificial appendages, to pay that humane attention to inferiors, which alone can inſpire eſteem or conciliate affection! Nor was it merely the preference of perſons in lower life, that was to be reckoned an evil; but unfortunately almoſt all in that rank of life in France were extremely ignorant, and conſequently incapable of executing with wiſdom or propriety the functions of legiſlators. Even this was not all: the people became, in numerous inſtances, the dupes of impudence and falſe

falſe pretenſions. Men who had the art of ſpeaking plauſibly impoſed upon their imaginations; violence uſurped the place of real courage; effrontery ſerved inſtead of argument, and every one, in proportion to the extravagance and exaggeration of his ideas, was deemed more truly the FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE.

Such is the ſtate of things at preſent in France: at leaſt, whatever other ideas may be entertained of it by the French themſelves, I am well perſuaded, ſuch is the judgment pronounced upon it by impartial Europe. We are of opinion, that owing to the operation of the cauſes formerly mentioned, every aſſembly has been worſe compoſed than the one that preceded it, and of courſe the preſent Convention worſt of all. The number of ignorant heads, and conſequently the power of men of bad hearts, has been continually increaſing. I am clear,

however, that the great majority of the three aſſemblies have been well-meaning and worthy men. But good intention is not alone ſufficient to conſtitute a legiſlator.

It is a ſingular and melancholy conſideration, that at preſent the great characters who began the revolution, and to whoſe talents and exertions the chief merit of it is due, have either diſappeared, or are reduced to ſilence and obſcurity. I will not ſpeak of Barnave or Monteſquieu; let even La Fayette and Clermont Tonnere be reckoned of doubtful merit; but impartial Europe demands why La Rochefoucauld became the victim of popular fury? ſhe demands where is honeſt Manuel, where is Bailly? why ſhe hears little of ingenious Roederer; and who are the men to whom France now gives that confidence in her ſenate which ſhe would have conferred on Petion,

tion, Briſſot, Condorcet, Sieyes, and Buzot? The fact is, that at a time when all arts are abſorbed in the ſingle one of SPEAKING, or rather of DECLAIMING; when noiſe drowns calm argument, and lungs ſupply the place of reaſon—when, finally, the clamours of ignorant and unprincipled tribunes, are conſtantly raiſed againſt every meaſure that is not exaggerated or ferocious, the man of modeſt worth, the ſage and the philoſopher, will keep ſilence.

The miniſtry is better compoſed, if we except the Jacobin Pache*, to whoſe incapacity alone it was owing that Dumourier failed in the conqueſt of Holland. The machinations of a faction, acting on popular ignorance, chaced away the virtuous Roland, whom all Europe revered; but Garat remains, and his other colleagues poſſeſs the reputation of talents and virtue. For this rea-

* Now Mayor of Paris.

ſon perhaps, at ſuch a period as this, they are unable to do any thing. Such men are not fit inſtruments for the faction that reigns. The *municipality* of Paris, which is very differently compoſed, domineers over all, and is ſupported by the *ſections*, now for the moſt part deſerted by the intelligent part of the citizens, and by the *Jacobins*, who are as unlike to what that ſociety originally was, as modern Italy is to ancient Rome.

If we ſhould reſume the whole of this narration, we ſhould find that the progreſs of the French revolution, may be divided into the following ſtages.

I.

That in which the people and the ariſtocracy united to limit the monarchy, July 14, 1789.

II.

That in which the people began to deſtroy the ariſtocracy, with the concurrence,

rence, in appearance at leaſt, of the majority of the nobles. The real period of this was Auguſt 4, 1789, when privileges were given up, and feudal rights aboliſhed. But, in compliance with popular ideas, we may fix it at June 20, 1790, when titles were aboliſhed.

III.

That in which the ariſtocracy, who had hitherto acted with the people, coaleſced with the court againſt the people. This period commenced immediately after the return of the king, June 25, 1791, and was marked by the defection of Barnave, the Lameths, &c. &c.

IV.

That in which the people deſtroyed at once both the monarchy and the ariſtocracy, and eſtabliſhed the republic, Auguſt 10, 1792.

V.

That in which the people divided amongſt themſelves, and became the prey of factious men; when a minority, both in the Convention and in the country at large, governed the majority, ſubdued by fear. This period of anarchy commenced ſoon after the 10th of Auguſt: its progreſs is marked by the maſſacre of the priſoners the ſecond of September 1792, and the pillage of the grocers, the 23d and 26th of February, 1793.

Thus, in the courſe of four years, has France, partly from her own fault, but much more from the fault of unfortunate circumſtances, paſſed from *deſpotiſm*, thro' the ſtages of *limited monarchy* and *republicaniſm*, to *anarchy*, which is certainly begun, but of which I hope the reign will not be long.

You

You will perhaps be diſpoſed at preſent to put a queſtion to me—why I have ſaid nothing of the ſecond of September? Truly I would have been glad to have blotted out for ever the remembrance of that horrid day—but impartial hiſtory, which in a free ſtate refuſes to ſcreen any event from the ſcrutiny of truth, left me no hopes of throwing a veil over that dreadful tranſaction; and the ſole reaſon why I have not already mentioned it was, becauſe it did not at all neceſſarily enter into my narration. It was truly a *hors d'oeuvre*, an event iſolated from the general courſe of events, an accident that attended on, but had no neceſſary connection with the revolution.

Over this ſhocking tranſaction there hangs a darkneſs which no inveſtigation has yet been able to penetrate.—I ſhall give you candidly my opinion; but I wiſh you to receive it with caution. I would

would not impoſe on you conjecture for hiſtory.

Of one thing I am clear, which is, that the Engliſh idea of it is totally unfounded. In London it was repreſented as a mere wanton and unprovoked effuſion of the cruelty and ferociouſneſs of the French populace. It was ſaid that, without any motive but the thirſt of blood, the people of Paris roſe in general inſurrection, ruſhed into the priſons, and maſſacred many thouſands of unhappy wretches who were confined there! But ſuch a maſſacre, Madam, was never heard of not even in the darkeſt ages.—Exaggerated power, the greateſt corrupter of our feeble virtue, has converted ſome individuals into monſters—as for inſtance, the late Emperor of Morocco, who found his higheſt amuſement on his death-bed, in ſhooting at, cutting and wounding the unhappy priſoners whom the chance of war had put into his power!

power! But never was it known, that a whole people were thus depraved. Read the narrations that hiſtory has preſerved of thoſe dreadful ſcenes which diſgrace humanity, and you will uniformly find, that either ſome great political deluſion, religious ſuperſtition, or the fatal habit which deſpotiſm has introduced amongſt men, of renouncing their own reaſon, and blindly obeying the wicked commands of a tyrant, were the real cauſes that occaſioned them. You may be aſſured then, that the ſecond of September was not an exception to all that was ever before experienced in the hiſtory of the world. Such ſtrange views of it may be left to a certain parliamentary declaimer! but men of ſober ſenſe will find it analogous to other events in hiſtory, and explain it on the known principles of human nature.

Two opinions of the origin of this event are generally entertained here, neither

neither of which appear to me quite exact. It is ſuppoſed by ſome, that the ſecond of September was the reſult of a deep and long-premeditated plan, formed by certain perſons in high authority, with a view to place all the power of the ſtate in the hands of their own party, and at the ſame time to revenge their private quarrels on thoſe who had become obnoxious to them by oppoſing their ambitious views. But on this ſuppoſition, of a premeditated plan by a party, it appears to me very difficult to account for their beginning with ſo uſeleſs and odious a meaſure as the maſſacre of helpleſs priſoners. Such men were not even directly their enemies, and in their confinement could no longer do them harm; and after they were deſtroyed, the great work ſtill remained to be accompliſhed, namely, the ruin of thoſe able and active men in the Convention, who *directly* oppoſed their wiſhes.

The

The maſſacre of the priſoners appears to me ſo ſtrange, ſo dangerous, ſo round about and unlikely a mode of obtaining the chief power, that I cannot imagine any party at once ſo weak and wicked as to have projected it for this end; unleſs we could attribute to them the horrid atrocity of intending to begin with the priſoners, and afterwards to excite the people to murder the miniſters, the principal members of the National Aſſembly, and all thoſe citizens of Paris who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by a love of order and reſpect to the laws. There is indeed one monſter in France, to whom nature, by ſome ſtrange deviation, has given a human form, who is capable of having conceived ſuch a plan, or any other, however execrable: but this wretch ſtands ſeparated, by his ferocious folly, from even the worſt men in France, and if he had formed ſuch a plan, it muſt have been perfectly certain to thoſe with whom

whom he then acted, that all the influence he had attained by deluding the people, would have been unable to have induced them to proceed to ſuch horrors. With reſpect to avenging private quarrels, there has hardly been alleged any inſtances of perſons being impriſoned, where there was not ground for ſuſpecting them of ariſtocracy. Petion, who admits that ſeveral of the arreſts were too haſty and on too ſlight grounds, does not however inſinuate, that they originated from private enmity. And it ſeems evident, that if this motive had operated in any conſiderable degree in the affair, the inſtances would have been numerous, and the connection between the cauſe and effect eaſy to be traced, from that which exiſted between the victims and the perpetrators of the crime.

Another opinion is, that the maſſacre of the priſoners was ſolely the act of thirty or forty aſſaſſins, while all Paris, intimi-

intimidated or ignorant of the ſmallneſs of their force, remained motionleſs, ſuffered the horrid deed to be executed, and the perpetrators to eſcape.

That the immediate *executors* of this crime were generally a ſet of ignorant, brutal, and ferocious wretches, ſuch as are always to be found in great towns, I readily admit. But that a handful of ſuch banditti formed the original plan of deſtroying about 1500 perſons, from whom they could have no hope of plunder; and continued the execution of it for ſeveral days, while the municipality, the department, the Convention, and the national guard were all in exiſtence, is to me utterly incredible; nor can I poſſibly free my mind from the belief, that the aſſaſſins who committed this crime acted under an impulſe very general amongſt the people, and were connived at, if not originally employed, by ſome great inviſible power.

If it were allowable to name any one without proofs, ſuſpicion would fall on the municipality of Paris, leaving out the Mayor, M. Petion, who moſt evidently was judged unworthy to be entruſted with this infernal ſecret; and of the municipal body that part who then formed the committee of Surveillance is more particularly to be ſuſpected:—"That committee," ſays Petion, "filled all the priſons. It is not to be diſſembled, that, if many of theſe arreſts were juſt and neceſſary, others were too ſlightly ventured on. The blame of this is rather to be thrown on their agents than on the chiefs. The officers of police were ill adviſed; and amongſt others, one man, whoſe very name is become ſhocking—whoſe very name throws terror into the minds of all peaceable citizens, ſeemed to have ſeized on the direction of all their motions. Aſſiduouſly preſent at all their conferences, he med-

dled

dled in every affair; he ſpoke and commanded as a maſter. I complained of it loudly to the commune, and I terminated my opinion with theſe words—Marat is either the moſt fooliſh, or the moſt wicked of men!"

But even Marat, who certainly is not deficient in acuteneſs, muſt have known that he could not produce any effect, unleſs there exiſted a *prediſpoſition* in the people to ſome act of the kind. It muſt have been on the ground of this that he made his preparations for an event which he foreſaw would happen; and the aſſaſſins who committed it muſt alſo have had good reaſon to believe that they would act with impunity under the protection of Marat and the connivance of the committee of Surveillance.

Had the crimes of the ſecond of September been ſolely the act of a few low villains, it would have been eaſy to have

detected

detected and punished them. But, in spite of the repeated calls of private members, and the decrees of the Assembly for investigating this dark business and executing vengeance on its authors, no light has yet been thrown on it, nor any one punished on account of it. The names of the judges who passed sentence on the prisoners are unknown; and, though thousands must have seen them at the time, no one pretends to know them, or to have seen them since. The same invisible power that produced this event has continued to paralize every effort to discover the executors of it, and will very probably baffle ultimately every attempt to bring them to justice.

If we cannot trace the origin of the second of September to any one cause; if it be true that even the influence and the wickedness of Marat could not alone have produced it, there will arise a probability, that it originated from a combination

bination of cauſes, and theſe ſuch as we have ſcarcely ever known to have occurred at the ſame time. We may trace theſe by reflecting on the circumſtances previous to, or exiſting at that time. If in theſe we ſhould find ſome which rendered the priſoners the objects of *deteſtation* to the people, and others ſuddenly ſuperadded, which rendered them not leſs the objects of their *dread*, in all probability we ſhall have diſcovered the primary cauſe of their deſtruction.

Let me recal to your thoughts the tenth of Auguſt.—It is the true key to the ſecond of September. On that day ſome thouſand perſons are ſaid to have fallen, in a conflict which the people conſidered as ſolely occaſioned by the treachery of the court and the ariſtocracy. The death of theſe perſons filled Paris with widows and orphans—with parents diſtracted at the loſs of their children

children—ſiſters bereft of their brothers—and relations mourning for their friends. What in foreign war produces only ſorrow and tears, in civil conteſts begets wrath and fury. Such was the caſe on this occaſion. Indignation ſoon ſucceeded to grief; and dreadful vengeance was determined on, as ſoon as an opportunity ſhould offer to put it in execution.

The perſons then in power, and eſpecially the committee of Surveillance, made ſtrict ſearch after the authors and abettors of this affair. A vaſt number of perſons previouſly ſuſpected of ariſtocracy, or accuſed of being concerned in promoting the views of the court, at that period were arreſted. The gaols were ſoon gorged with priſoners, and the tribunals overloaded with buſineſs, and, hampered by the common forms of juſtice, too ſlow for a period of revolution,

made

made almoſt no perceptible progreſs in bringing the guilty to condemnation *. The people, rendered jealous by perpetual deception, began to believe that the criminals were ſecretly favoured by the judges. It was ſaid, that "crimes had wings, and the law limped after them;" and a general murmur and diſſatisfaction took place.

"Juſtice," ſays Petion, "was ſlow to pronounce on the fate of the priſoners, and their numbers increaſed every

* It is certain that the new ſyſtem of juriſprudence rendered the conviction of criminals tedious. An acute writer obſerves, that the beſt informed lawyers had ſaid to him, that they would never have been able to convict a criminal, if they had followed exactly the new forms. See a pamphlet, entitled, "Lettre d'un Negociant Anglois à un Negociant François, &c." As it is the genius of free governments, however, to ſet a *high value on human life*, it is right that it ſhould be rendered difficult to convict the accuſed. Only rules generally good will not apply to the moment of a revolution.

day. On the twenty-third of Auguſt one of the ſections came to the council of the municipality, and declared expreſsly, that the citizens, weary of the delays which took place in the deciſions, would force the gates of theſe aſylums, and ſacrifice to their vengeance the criminals detained there. This petition, conceived in the moſt frantic terms, remained without cenſure—*It was even received with applauſes!*"

There was ſtill, however, ſomething farther wanting to produce a movement ſo irregular and horrid as the maſſacre of the ſecond of September. Unhappily the circumſtances ſupplied this: for at this critical moment arrived the news, that the Auſtrian and Pruſſian armies had repulſed the French troops—that Longwy and Verdun were ſurrendered by treachery—and that the Duke of Brunſwick was in full march to Paris. On the twenty-ſeventh the Aſſembly ordered

ordered 30,000 men to march inſtantly to the frontiers, to make a laſt effort againſt the enemy. On the thirty-firſt, the acquittal of the miniſter Montmorin exaſperated the people; and at the ſame time a perſon condemned revealed a plot, ſaid to be formed to releaſe all the priſoners, who, after committing every exceſs in the city, were to go out to meet the Duke of Brunſwick and his army.

Conſternation ſeized all mens minds; and, while thouſands were preparing to quit Paris, to march againſt the combined armies, the fatal ideas that produced the ſecond of September were either ſuggeſted by certain wretches who wiſhed for ſuch an event, or rather ſpontaneouſly aroſe in mens minds from the circumſtances. "How can we," it was ſaid, "leave Paris when the priſons are filled with traitors who ought long ſince

by their death to have atoned for their crimes againſt their country? What if this murderous Quixotte, this Brunſwick, ſhould arrive at Paris, to make it an example and a terror to the world, as he has threatened in his horrid manifeſto? What then would become of our wives and children, when he opened the gates of the priſons, and let looſe on them theſe wretches whom he regards as his beſt friends? Let us go, before we quit our homes, and execute deſerved puniſhment on theſe traitors. Now is the time to revenge our brethren murdered on the tenth of Auguſt!"

Whether juſt or erroneous, theſe arguments produced conviction. The horrid deed was determined on; banditti were not wanting to execute it. The inhabitants of Paris, puſillanimous, or ignorant of the extent of the danger, dared not to ſtir out of their houſes during the confuſion. The conſtituted

authorities, believing that the people were either concerned in it, or at leaſt approved of it, and that the frenzy was irreſiſtible, either did not interfere at all, or at leaſt not with that energy which was requiſite to check the evil. Some deputies of the Convention went to the ſpot; and amongſt them the courageous efforts of Manuel merit to be recorded. But he was not ſupported. Petion ordered the judges, who called themſelves the *executive power* of the people, to quit their ſavage office. They obeyed; but almoſt immediately returned to their poſt. Of all men it ſeems moſt likely that Santerre, the commandant general, might have ſtopt this lawleſs and cruel affair; and it is to him, perhaps, chiefly that Petion alludes, when he ſays, that theſe crimes might have been prevented, "if all thoſe who had power and force in their hands had viewed them with

horror; but I muſt ſay it, becauſe it is true, ſeveral of theſe public men, of theſe defenders of the country, believed that theſe diſaſtrous and diſhonourable days were neceſſary; that they purged the ſtate from dangerous men; that they carried terror into the minds of conſpirators; and that crimes odious in morality were uſeful in politics *."

Such, if I am not miſinformed, was the ſecond of September. And, if this account of it be juſt, we ſhall not be at a loſs to ſee why it has hitherto been impracticable to puniſh the authors of it. One ſet of men ſeem to have contrived — another to have executed—a third connived at it—and the reſt might,

* The hiſtory of the ſecond of September is a proper example of the conſequences of their doctrine, who maintain two kinds of morality, and aſſert that the morals of a ſtateſman are different from that of an individual.—To ſuch horrors as we have juſt mentioned does this ſyſtem inevitably lead.

but

but did not, hinder it. Who is to be puniſhed where all are to blame? What ſatisfaction would there be in bringing to puniſhment a few ignorant wretches, the mere inſtruments of the crime, while the authors of it are either unknown, or too numerous, or too powerful, to be puniſhed? Finally, what puniſhment was to be inflicted on a crime, that, though it muſt for ever be deplored by humanity, and condemned by religion, yet muſt be acknowledged by impartial reaſon to have been committed under ſuch peculiar circumſtances, as ſerved to conceal its horror under a veil of ſuppoſed neceſſity?

Even this wretched apology does not extend to every perſon concerned in the affair of the ſecond of September. There may have been, there probably were, ſome who concurred in

it from the baſeſt motives. I only ſpeak of the conduct and views of the majority. And I am very far from thinking, even with them, that the meaſure was either neceſſary or juſtifiable. I regard it in no other light than as a horrid crime. It filled Paris with horror, diſtruſt, and diſmay; it ſhocked all the people of Europe, and rendered liberty, as Roederer well expreſſed it, "*épouvantable* aux nations*."

The illuſtrious Klopſtock, author of the *Meſſiah*, who had accepted the title of *French citizen*, ſent it back as aſhamed to bear it after this event. Had it even been uſeful to the revolution, I would not have vindicated it; for I do not think that there are two kinds of morality any more than two kinds of truth. I am not of Mr. Burke's opinion, that

* Frightful to the nations.

vice

vice by losing its grossness loses half its evil. Such doctrines are most pernicious in practice. Gross vice is less dangerous than that which is refined; as a man is more in danger of suffocation from the vapour of charcoal, which secretly and imperceptibly pollutes the air, than from the smoke of common fuel, which announces the danger by offending the senses by its disagreeable odour.

I believe nobody has as yet attempted a regular account of the affair of the second of September. I may therefore claim indulgence if I have mistaken some points. I am inclined, however, to think that Petion's opinion is nearly the same with mine:—"Were these assassinations," says he, "commanded, or were they directed by certain men? I have had lists given me; I have received re-

ports; I have collected ſome facts: but, if I had to pronounce as a judge, I could not ſay—There is the criminal!" M. de St. Meard, who was confined in the Abbaye St. Germain, and tried with others before this dreadful tribunal, has written an account of what he ſaw and heard, in a very intereſting pamphlet, entitled, "Mon agonie de trente-huit heures *;" and even from his relation, horrible as it is, it is eaſy to ſee that the affair of the ſecond of September was not a mere indiſcriminate maſſacre, but a kind of *ſavage juſtice*, executed by a people frantic at the moment with fear, jealouſy, and thirſt of vengeance. A ſoldier, whom M. de St. Meard was fortunate enough to intereſt in his favour by ſpeaking to him in the dialect of his country, ſaid, "If thou art a prieſt, or a conſpirator of the palace of M. Veto,

* My agony of thirty-eight hours.

thou

thou art ruined; but, if thou art no traitor, don't fear—I will anſwer for thy life." "I am very ſure," replied St. Meard, "not to be accuſed of theſe things; but I paſs for ſomewhat of an ariſtocrat." "Oh, that is nothing," returned he: "the judges know that there are honeſt men of all claſſes. The preſident is an honeſt man, and no fool." M. de St. Meard was acquitted, although he had the extreme imprudence to avow before the judges, that he was a *royaliſt*. A murmur which his words occaſioned was checked by one of them, who ſaid, "We are not here to judge opinions, but the conſequences of them." On his acquittal the preſident ordered three men to conduct him to his own houſe, who faithfully performed their miſſion, and refuſed a purſe, which his friend who lived there, in the ecſtaſy of his joy, offered them: "We do not execute this profeſſion for money," ſaid they.—

" Behold your friend!—He promiſed us a glaſs of brandy. We will take that, and return to our poſt*."

From the ſame publication it appears that there were attendant on theſe executions a great body of the people, who took no part in them but as ſpectators; and of whom Petion ſays, that " they obſerved a mournful ſilence at the ſentences of death, and uttered cries of joy

* The form of the acquittal was as follows: " We, the commiſſaries named by the people to execute juſtice on the traitors detained in the priſon of the Abbaye, having made the citizen J. St. Meard appear before us the fourth of September, who has proved that the accuſations brought againſt him were falſe; and that he never entered into any plot againſt the patriots: we have made him be proclaimed innocent, in preſence of the people, who applauded the liberty we granted to him. In faith of which we have delivered him the preſent certificate at his demand. We invite all the citizens to grant him aid and aſſiſtance.—At the Abbaye, the 4th year of Liberty, and the firſt of Equality.

POIR... BER...."

when

when they heard pronounced an acquittal." It appears that they even interpoſed ſometimes to ſave a priſoner: for old M. Cazotte being condemned and brought out to be executed, his daughter followed him, and, courageouſly graſping him around the neck, to ſave him from the ſabres lifted up to deſtroy him, the people, moved with the ſpectacle, demanded his pardon, and obtained it.

In an ariſtocratic publication*, where various enormities of the maſſacre are carefully detailed, I remember to have read, that, amongſt thoſe who were employed in the ſavage taſk of deſtroying the priſoners, one young man of eighteen years of age was obſerved to be peculiarly active. Being aſked the reaſon, he ſaid, he had loſt his two brothers the tenth of Auguſt, and was reſolved to re-

* Almanac des honnêtes gens.

venge

venge their death. He boaſted that he had put to death 50 priſoners with his own hand. This ſtrongly confirms my idea, that the ſecond of September drew its origin from the tenth of Auguſt.

The ſame author gives a liſt of the perſons put to death, extracted from the regiſters of the priſons, by which and other liſts it does not appear that their number could exceed 1500, though ſome one in London publiſhed a pamphlet with the prefix of "SIX THOUSAND PERSONS MURDERED IN PARIS." Of theſe 1500, too, it muſt be noted, that a great number were impriſoned for other crimes—for murder, robbery, forgery, &c. M. Perilhe, the ingenious author of the Hiſtory of Surgery, a man of probity and judgment, whom I have long known here, and who had much opportunity to be acquainted with this melancholy ſcene, aſſured me, that very few indeed ſuffered whom the law would

not

not have condemned. It is certain alſo, that ſome were ſuffered to eſcape whom the law afterwards ſeized on, and condemned to death. There was one ſuch inſtance in the ſection des Cordeliers, where M. Perilhe lives.

This is the beſt account I can give you of this ſtrange affair. Thoſe who conceive it originally the work of ſome particular men, have named Marat, Roberſpierre, Sergent, Panis, Santerre, and Danton. But proofs have not been brought forward; and, till I am otherwiſe informed, I muſt believe that the treachery of the court made the tenth of Auguſt—the tenth of Auguſt laid the foundation of the ſecond of September—and the Duke of Brunſwick provoked the execution of it.

Let us now endeavour to trace the origin of the erroneous opinions entertained in England reſpecting the French revolution. I ſaid, that we at firſt regarded

garded it in a doubtful point of view, becauſe we thought it would not ſucceed; for we did not know how ſtrong and univerſal a ſpirit of liberty had ariſen in the nation. As it advanced, it gained more of our confidence; but it proceeded ſo violently, and ſo ſoon outran the limits of our ideas of liberty, that it awakened a jealouſy and diſlike in many minds; and theſe prejudices were unfortunately confirmed by various other cauſes. One of the firſt and capital of theſe was the *miſrepreſentations of the newſpapers*.—The editors of theſe journals were often miſinformed as to the facts: yet, had they confined themſelves to fact, their errors would have been comparatively few. But they indulged largely in criticiſms and ſpeculations on theſe facts; and for this they had neither adequate ſources of information, nor ſufficient knowledge of the genius and manner of the country. It is eaſy to obtain a ſuperficial knowledge

knowledge of a foreign nation: but to delineate juſtly its hiſtory; to trace events to their ſources in its character and habits, ſo as to appreciate their real nature, and fix the degree of approbation or cenſure which belong to them, requires ſuch an intimate acquaintance with a people as cannot be obtained without living amongſt them, and poſſeſſing opportunities of information and a capacity of profiting from them that does not fall to the ſhare of many of the claſs of writers now alluded to. Every man of obſervation, who has viſited foreign countries, muſt have experienced the erroneouſneſs of the firſt judgment he pronounced on practices different from thoſe of his own country; and will certainly own, that, when he knew the whole, he found many things to be proper, and even neceſſary, that appeared to him at firſt uſeleſs or wrong. It is for this reaſon that the books of travellers,

lers, even of ſuch as do not intend to deceive, are filled with abſurd wonders, with applauſe and cenſure equally miſplaced. A mind full of Engliſh ideas is incapable of juſtly appreciating ſingle parts of French manners; as a mind filled with French ideas is incapable of forming a juſt judgment on ſingle parts of Engliſh manners. For this reaſon the ideas and conduct of the French are almoſt conſtantly miſrepreſented in our newſpapers; and the ſame happens to us in theirs. As they know ſtill leſs of us than we do of them, from their almoſt univerſal ignorance of our language, it is incredible what abſurdities one meets with in their journals relative to the affairs of England.

But miſrepreſentation from ignorance, though a copious enough ſource, was not the only one of the errors of our newſpapers. The majority of them muſt be attributed to miſrepreſentation from

deſign.

deſign. It was ſuppoſed from the beginning of the French revolution that our court viewed it in an unfavourable light; and therefore all thoſe called miniſterial papers united in decrying it. Add to this, that the opulent emigrants, and eſpecially M. de Calonne, ſpared neither pains nor expence to influence them. It is, I believe, a notorious fact, that the latter expended conſiderable ſums in this way.—The motives are obvious.

For theſe reaſons I have maintained, ever ſince the beginning of the revolution, that no man could form any adequate idea of that great event from Engliſh newſpapers. The Morning Chronicle comes near to form an exception; and owes its ſuperiority to the impartiality and talents of its editors—to their great exertions to procure information—and to their ſtricter adherence to the authority of the French journals.

But

But I muſt obſerve farther, that even the French journals do not convey to an Engliſh reader a perfect idea of the French revolution, as it affected the whole of the country. For they are all printed in Paris, repreſent its ſtate, and imbibe its character. Now Paris has been the centre of all the agitations, and the theatre of crimes unknown in the country. It preſents, therefore, a picture of the revolution ſo much more unfavourable than the other parts of the kingdom, that I will venture to affirm, had one Engliſhman known the French revolution only from a journal publiſhed at Paris, and another only from a journal publiſhed at Bourdeaux, where peace and tranquillity have almoſt uninterruptedly reigned, their general idea of the event would have been widely different. I could wiſh, therefore, our countrymen, if they mean to do juſtice to the French revolution, not to miſtake Paris for

France,

France, nor reaſon from the troubles of that corrupt metropolis to the ſtate of the provinces, which until a late period have been generally much more tranquil.

It was not the newſpapers only that calumniated the French revolution. At a very early period, it was attacked with all the powers of eloquence by Mr. Burke, a writer who had long enjoyed an extenſive reputation, and whoſe opinion, on any ſubject relative to politics, could not fail to excite curioſity, and to be read with attention. Introduced into life under ariſtocratical patronage, he was led to eſpouſe the party of oppoſition in parliament, and in conſequence loſt the favour of the court. While his party had a proſpect of ſucceeding, and by their numbers and talents formed a formidable phalanx againſt the miniſter, Mr. Burke adhered faithfully to their cauſe, and during the illneſs of the king,

no

no man laboured more diligently to eſtabliſh the regency. But when under the adminiſtration of Mr. Pitt, the abilities and prudence of the miniſter, joined to a ſingular concurrence of fortunate circumſtances, had gained him the general confidence of the nation, and rendered the hopes of oppoſition almoſt deſperate, our author appeared deſirous of looking out for an opportunity to make his peace with the court, and found it in the French revolution.

I am ready to own, that there were in that revolution ſeveral circumſtances calculated to ſhock Mr. Burke's early prejudices; and I am far from accuſing him of having no motive to write againſt it, but that of reconciling himſelf to the court: for he had always ſeen government through the ſpectacles of old eſtabliſhments, and not as it is in itſelf, or as it ought to be founded in the nature of man, and in the principles of eternal

reaſon. But while I make this conceſſion, which candour obliges me to do, I muſt at the ſame time declare, that I cannot give him all the credit that ſome do for his predictions reſpecting the French revolution; for many of them have not been verified, and he that makes a number of bold gueſſes, will always ſucceed in ſome of them. Thoſe that have taken place, have generally ariſen from other cauſes than thoſe ſuppoſed by Mr. Burke; and I may add, as to the reſt, that the judicious friends of the French revolution foreſaw, as well as he did, and feared the evils he predicted; but as they believed there was a poſſibility that they might not happen, they were glad to ſee a trial made for the inſtruction of the human race. For inſtance, in treating of military juries, and other novelties, propoſed in France, Mr. Chriſtie declined vindicating them, and repreſented them only as bold experiments,

riments, worthy of being made, to aſcertain how far we could go in extending liberty and equal laws to all the claſſes of ſociety. It is taking a ſafe ſide, in all caſes, to propheſy the failure of great undertakings, for few of them ſucceed, compared to thoſe that fail. There were, I dare ſay, many narrow-minded, ſplenetic, or ſelfiſh men, who predicted the ruin of thoſe heroic ſpirits, who firſt projected a voyage round the world, and perhaps reproached their undertaking as a mad attempt, which would end in their own deſtruction and that of the ſeamen they carried with them. It is eaſy to argue in this way; but generous minds hope the beſt, and ſee with pleaſure the commencement of enterprizes, that promiſe to improve the condition of humanity; rejoice in their progreſs, and mourn at their fall.

But there is another reproach of more importance to be made to Mr. Burke:

it

is, that, in all probability, his predictions, and thoſe of the writers who followed him on the ſame ſide in France, were in a great meaſure the cauſes of the evils they foretold. Mr. Burke predicted the death of Louis the ſixteenth, at a time when not a human being in France had ſuch an idea in his mind; and the eloquent and ſpecious deſcription he gave of the imaginary diſgrace and diſtreſs of royalty, moſt certainly had a conſiderable effect on the mind of that unfortunate prince, and ſtill more on that of the queen, and the perſons of her court. We all know that the king had no reaſon to be diſcontented with his ſituation as it was determined by the Conſtituent Aſſembly; but we alſo know, that nothing is ſo eaſy for an able man, as to render a weak man diſcontented with his condition, by perſuading him that he is ill-treated, and painting to him deluſive pictures of ad-

vantages that he ought to enjoy, or of inconveniences that he ought not to ſuffer. But for Mr. Burke, and his aſſociates in France, it is highly probable Louis the ſixteenth might now have been reigning peaceably on his throne. I do not mean to accuſe their intentions; but I am warranted to ſay, that their writings contributed at once to render the court diſcontented with the revolution, and the nation ſuſpicious of the court. Of conſequence, they had a great ſhare in producing the calamities of the monarch and his unfortunate family.

A multitude of writers replied to Mr. Burke. Mr. Chriſtie produced *facts* that have never been diſproved. Mr. Mackintoſh vied with him in his own manner, and exhibited his eloquence without his diſorder; while Paine, by profound reflections on the origin of government, and the rights of man, opened a new field of ſpeculation, and made a deep

and

and extraordinary impreſſion on the public mind.

I know not whether you ever chanced to meet with the opinion of Mr. Garat, at preſent miniſter of the interior department, on the works of Mr. Burke and Mr. Mackintoſh; but if you have not, I am convinced you will thank me for communicating it. When one peruſes, ſays he, the work of Mr. Burke, ſo full of fire, diſorder, and opinions taken for granted—ſo bold in ſtyle, and ſo feeble in reaſoning—one would ſuppoſe that one read the work of a *young man*; while, on the other hand, that of Mr. Mackintoſh, ſo well arranged, ſo firm in principles, and exact in reaſoning, gives one the idea of a mind matured by age and experience: yet Mr. Burke has ſeen ſixty years, and Mr. Mackintoſh not thirty. But Burke is an old orator, and Mackintoſh a young philoſopher. Originally their powers may not have

been very different; but the one has nouriſhed his faculties by the ſtudy of ancient rhetoricians and parliamentary orators, while the latter has formed his mind by the ſtudy of Locke, and Tacitus, and Collins.

A variety of other anſwers to Mr. Burke appeared, and the public read with ſatisfaction the performances of Mr. Rous, Mrs. Macaulay Graham, Miſs Wollſtoncraft, Sir Brooke Boothby, and others. Theſe writers made a powerful impreſſion on the thinking part of the Engliſh nation. The momentary effect of Mr. Burke's eloquence was effaced, the conteſt on his ſide became doubtful, and at length diſadvantageous. The war with Auſtria and Pruſſia, as it gave the idea that the French would certainly be cruſhed, gave a turn to this diſpoſition of things; but when the victories of Dumourier extricated them triumphantly from this danger, the public approbation

tion of their cauſe became ſtronger than ever. All the timid men, who were afraid to declare their ſentiments, and all thoſe who have no principle but to be with the uppermoſt, began openly to eſpouſe the French ſide; and this diſpoſition was ſignally diſplayed at the anniverſary of the Engliſh revolution, at the London tavern, Nov. 4, 1792, where France occupied the whole attention of a moſt numerous, reſpectable, and harmonious company.

A ſeries of events were however approaching, which were calculated to produce a very different effect. The conſtitution of 1791, formed by the firſt Aſſembly, being deſtroyed, and with it thoſe principles of moderation and that limited monarchy which the Engliſh are generally attached to, and which Mr. Chriſtie had defended, the effect of his reaſoning was in conſequence invalidat-

ed; and Mr. Paine, having intermixed ſeveral perſonal ſarcaſms againſt the king and government of England, which irritated a number of perſons, and carried his principles far beyond the ſyſtem eſtabliſhed in our country, gave riſe to a republican ſpirit, which alarmed the court, the nobles, the clergy, and finally, all the great proprietors. A ſpirit of general terror was produced, and by certain perſons, for certain ends, zealouſly propagated.

The deſtruction of the monarchy in France on the 10th of Auguſt—the horrors of the maſſacre of the 2d of September, and then the death of the king, finally alienated the minds of Engliſhmen from the French revolution; rendered popular a war, which otherwiſe no miniſter would have dared to undertake; diſguſted all wiſe, and ſhocked all humane men; and left to us, and all who

who had eſpouſed the cauſe, no hope but that Heaven, which knows how to bring good out of evil, would watch over an event ſo intereſting to the welfare of mankind as the French revolution; nor ſuffer the folly and vice of the agents concerned in it, to ſpoil the greateſt and nobleſt enterprize ever undertaken by a nation.

A variety of ſecondary cauſes operated, in conjunction with theſe primary ones, to alienate the minds of our countrymen from the French revolution. It is curious, and may be uſeful to trace a few of them.

Thoſe who have long held the firſt rank in any ſociety are always reluctant to yield up their place, or ſuffer others, who were below, to be raiſed above them. Accuſtomed to regard their own conſtitution as the perfection of civil polity, the Engliſh found a new ſource of diſapprobation of the French inſtitu-

tion: they forgot that their deareſt privileges, trial by jury, the liberty of the preſs, and other advantages, had once been regarded by foreign nations as audacious novelties; and had ſcandalized the deſpots of Europe and their degraded ſubjects, as much as the new experiments of the French did at preſent. It was a common ſaying in France, under the old ſyſtem, that

" Le roi d'Angleterre
" Regne dans l'enfer* ;

and the freedom of ſpeech, and of writing on public affairs, the deareſt rights of Engliſhmen, were conſtantly repreſented as abſurd and noxious privileges, that occaſioned eternal commotion in the ſtate, and *diſturbed the peace of government*. In ſpite of theſe facts, when circumſtances aroſe that hurt their na-

* The king of England reigns in hell.

tional

tional vanity, by exalting a rival people, many of our countrymen appeared to have forgotten the ancient hiſtory of England—the nations ſeemed to have changed ſides, and Engliſhmen talked of France as Frenchmen were wont to talk of England. But truth changes not with the faſhions of the times. It was not to be forgotten, that the Engliſh had been the firſt *bold experimenters*, in the ſcience of government in modern Europe—the firſt who carried into practical execution the calumniated principle of EQUALITY—the firſt people who formally brought a monarch to the ſcaffold—the firſt aſſerters of the neglected *rights of man*. In the common law of England, and in the commentaries of the older lawyers on it*, I have found all the fundamental principles of the French declaration des droits de l'homme.

* See the book entitled "*Doctor and Student*," *Forteſcue de laud. leg. Angl.* &c.

But, ſaid ſome, we made our revolution without bloodſhed, and theirs has been a continued ſcene of confuſion and murder. It is true, the revolution of 1688 was accompliſhed with little trouble; but it produced the wars of 1715 and 1745, in the laſt of which the metropolis very nearly fell into the hands of the enemy; a circumſtance that would have placed a popiſh deſpot on the throne, and annihilated the liberties of England. And it is to be obſerved, that the revolution of 1688 was but one of many events that formed the Engliſh conſtitution. That ſyſtem was the fruit of the labours of ages of ſtruggle and confuſion. The eſtabliſhment of our liberties coſt us many wars—and amidſt the civil diſſentions cauſed by the conteſt of principles againſt ancient error, our hiſtory records a ſad catalogue of crimes and cruelties committed

ted on all ſides. Whoever, Madam, will examine theſe annals, will ſoon be convinced, that we have not much ground to reproach our neighbours. In France, indeed, a greater number of events have been crowded into a ſhorter ſpace of time; and the enormities in France have been committed at a period, when, by means of the facility of communication, all public events are more widely and rapidly circulated than in former ages; circumſtances that alter the appearance, but not the reality of the caſe. We now enjoy the bleſſings of freedom, and have forgotten the price it coſt our anceſtors to obtain it. But no people ever travelled to the temple of Liberty by a path ſtrewed with roſes; nor has eſtabliſhed tyranny ever yielded to reaſon and juſtice, till after a ſevere ſtruggle. I do not pretend to juſtify the French, but I do not ſee much right that we at leaſt have to condemn them.

We cannot even reproach them with the fate of Louis the ſixteenth, without calling up to remembrance that of Charles the firſt.

I will very readily grant, that the French have been guilty of many *imprudences* in the courſe of their revolution; and I think I can prove, that the antipathy conceived againſt them by other nations, owes its origin in a great meaſure to this circumſtance. I ſhall previouſly obſerve, that they were under a neceſſity of making ſeveral important changes, all of which had a tendency to alienate the minds of numerous bodies of men, and to induce them, both at home and abroad, to cenſure the ſyſtem of the revolution.

The diminution of the royal influence and authority, muſt have diſguſted the courtiers and people of faſhion.

The abolition of the feudal right, ſome with an inadequate, and others with no indem-

indemnity, must have disaffected a great number of seigneurs and country gentlemen, as well as their dependents.

The same thing must have happened to the nobles, and those dependent on them, from the humiliation first, and then the abolition of hereditary nobility.

The destruction of the parliaments disgusted a numerous and opulent body; and the changes in the military constitution, with the want of discipline that was the immediate consequence of it, amongst the soldiers, alienated the minds of all the superior officers.

The reforms in ecclesiastical affairs made a multitude of foes, and these of the most terrible kind. The abolition of tythes, the changes in the dioceses, and the abolition of monks, enraged the clergy, and terrified all the weak and superstitious of the nation.

Should

Should we admit all theſe changes to have been neceſſary, we cannot however deny, that ſeveral of them were made too haſtily, and with too little tenderneſs for the ancient prejudices and habits of life of thoſe who were affected by them.

The alienation of the eccleſiaſtical lands has been ſo well defended by Mr. Mackintoſh and other able writers, that I cannot, for my part, entertain a doubt on the ſubject. But it appeared hard in the eyes of ſtrangers, that thoſe who had been accuſtomed to live in ſplendour and affluence ſhould on a ſudden be ſo much reduced; and it was contended, that the diminution ſhould not have taken place before the death of the actual incumbents. To this the French replied, that the reduction of the enormous ſalaries of the higher clergy was neceſſary to enable them to augment thoſe of the lower orders, the only perſons

ſons almoſt who were really uſeful to the ſtate. The reduced ſalaries were declared to be amply ſufficient, if the clergy would live as became their office, with temperance and ſimplicity, inſtead of ſcandalizing their profeſſion, and injuring religion, by an example of riot and luxury. As the nation had taken upon itſelf the care of the poor, with which the clergy were formerly charged, it was contended, that on this account a conſiderable reduction of their revenues was a juſtifiable meaſure. Finally, it was ſaid, that had they been burdened with the cares, expences, and duties of ſocial life, had they been obliged to provide for a family, greater ſympathy would have been ſhewn them; but that, being ſolitary and often uſeleſs individuals, the diminution of a revenue, which few of them applied to any good purpoſe, was to be regarded as a meaſure of public utility; not to mention, that as moſt of

them were ſuſpected of being ſecretly enemies to the revolution, it would have been very dangerous, at ſo critical a moment, to have left ſuch large revenues in their power, as they poſſeſſed under their ancient ſyſtem.

If theſe various conſiderations do not juſtify the *immediate* reduction of the ſalaries of the clergy, they at leaſt palliate it in a great degree. The misfortune is, that they were more adapted to ſtrike people on the ſpot, than ſtrangers, who either could not know, or not ſo well ſee the force of them.

With reſpect to hereditary nobility, it merits your particular attention, that it was really aboliſhed at that moment when the nobles renounced all their peculiar privileges, and ſubmitted to be in every reſpect as the reſt of their fellow-citizens. After this, nothing remained but an empty *name*, which conſiſtency ſhould have perhaps induced the nobles

to have given up alſo; but which the people ſhould not have quarrelled with, as they had obtained the *thing*. It is remarkable, however, that it was the abolition of the *name*, that made all the noiſe and clamour both in France and in Europe, inſomuch that although the meaſure was ſupported by Montmorency and La Rocheſoucauld, two of the moſt ancient families of nobleſſe in France, it occaſioned a general murmur in that country, and a general diſapprobation throughout Europe. The reaſons alleged to vindicate it by the French legiſlators were, that after the renunciation of all privileges, the titles connected with them became uſeleſs, and ſerved only as odious marks of diſtinction amongſt the citizens. It was added, that the *name* might, at ſome future period, be the means of bringing back the *thing*; an apprehenſion that could not fail to ſuggeſt itſelf to the ſuſpicious temper of the

French

French people, and which the prodigious clamour occaſioned by the abolition unfortunately appeared too well to juſtify.

Beſides theſe there were a variety of other meaſures adopted by the French, which were either palpably unneceſſary and impolitic, or of which the neceſſity and policy were at leaſt in a very great degree queſtionable; and an impartial ſpectator cannot excuſe them, for raiſing up needleſs hoſtility by wanton imprudences, at a period when they were conſtrained to make ſo many enemies, by the changes which their ſituation unavoidably required.

If the deſtruction of the monarchy was abſolutely neceſſary, certainly the death of the king was not; and France might have ſtruck ſurrounding nations with reverence at her ſublime clemency, in place of ſhocking all Europe by a condemnation, the juſtice of which was

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at beſt doubtful, and which the generality of them at preſent conſider as an atrocious crime. This ſanguinary ſtep excited horror in all the princes of Europe, from the legal ſovereign of our favoured iſland, to the deſpot of Conſtantinople; for Selim the third, as ſoon as he received the news that the French had put to death their grand ſultan, gave way to emotions of rage, and changed the lenient meaſures he had adopted towards the French, into violence and perſecution. It had a much worſe effect ſtill than this—By violating royalty in ſo unneceſſary, and, as it was thought, in ſo unjuſtifiable a manner, the French legiſlators offended the prejudices of the *people* in Europe, and in conſequence, rendered national and unanimous thoſe wars commenced againſt them by various princes, which, but for that, would have been languidly and ineffectually carried on.

However

However much indiſpoſed our countrymen were to the French from preceding reaſons, it is certain that the death of the king alone prepared their minds for war, and completed the triumph of the enemies of France in England. Various circumſtances too attending the trial of Louis the ſixteenth, which gave it an appearance of injuſtice and cruelty, contributed to ſtrengthen the fatal impreſſion it had made on the minds of men there; and the barbarous malignity with which certain perſons perſecuted the memory of the fallen monarch, the abſurd phraſe of *tyrant*, which they conſtantly reiterated of a poor weak prince, who was neither naturally vicious, nor had half talents to be a tyrant, diſguſted, as it could not fail to do in the higheſt degree, our reflecting countrymen.

It is natural to aſk, what could have induced

induced the French to adopt ſo unneceſſary and ſo impolitic a meaſure? The anſwer is, the violence of the people, hurried on by the manœuvres of a ſet of ſanguinary and unprincipled men, who at this period had obtained the chief power in the ſtate. You will recollect, that, as I formerly ſtated, we had paſſed the GOLDEN, and indeed were now arrived at the IRON AGE of the French revolution. The people had ſome ſhadow of reaſon too; for in all the progreſs of the revolution they have never committed any violence without a motive that appeared to them ſufficient to juſtify it. They ſaid, "If the ſmaller traitors have been ſacrificed, why ſhould the greateſt of all be ſuffered to eſcape?" They recollected with bitterneſs the maſſacre of the tenth of Auguſt, which they always regarded as occaſioned by the court. During the trial I have frequently found difficulty to get into the Convention

from

from the number of wounded and dying men who were aſſembled there to ſolicit vengeance; and it is certain that the ſevereſt menaces were offered to thoſe deputies who appeared diſpoſed to adopt lenient meaſures towards the king. How often they have been denounced ſince, and what riſks of being murdered they have more than once incurred, are known to all the world.

It has been objected to the French, that they belied their own declaration of renouncing all conqueſts, and ſeemed, under the ſpecious veil of promoting the liberties of mankind, to be carrying on the ſame ambitious projects that were ſo juſtly cenſured in the old government. This objection, ſo far as it applied to their *conqueſts*, was exceedingly ill-founded; and could not have been made but by thoſe who had been inattentive to the circumſtances in which they were placed, and which rendered it

impoſſible for them to have acted otherwiſe than they did. But the caſe is different with reſpect to their *re-unions* of other countries to their own, which were diſtinguiſhed by the name of *fraterniz-ing*. Theſe re-unions were at firſt made with great caution, and not until the voice of the great majority of the inhabitants was freely and unequivocally pronounced in favour of the meaſure.—Such was the caſe at Avignon. Afterwards fewer precautions were obſerved; and finally, an opinion having been circulated, that the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Ocean were the natural and proper boundaries of France, it did not ſeem neceſſary to be very ſcrupulous in extending them to theſe limits, when the ſacrifices were to be at the expence of powers hoſtile to the republic. Theſe proceedings, however, alarmed foreign princes, and afforded them a pretence for alleging, that, if this

ſyſtem

ſyſtem of fraternizing was not checked, the French would over-run all Europe. Moſt aſſuredly the National Convention had no ſuch idea—moſt aſſuredly their object was infinitely different from that of ambitious conquerors; but it muſt at the ſame time be allowed, that very unguarded expreſſions were uſed by ſome members of the Convention, who have more patriotiſm than good ſenſe; and, upon the whole, it ſeems evident that a friendly alliance between them and the vanquiſhed nations would have anſwered every end of the *re-union*, without expoſing them to the imputation of ambitious projects and luſt of domination.

I cannot quit this ſubject without remarking, that, from all I can judge, the true origin of this ſyſtem of fraternizing is to be found in the *concert of princes* againſt the revolution. The French unqueſtionably had no intention, at the beginning of their revolution, nor for a

long time after, of enlarging their territory; nor would they ever have thought of ſuch a project, if the combination of kings to cruſh them had not ſuggeſted to them the neceſſity of oppoſing to this a combination of the people, and of ſurrounding their own country with a barrier of emancipated provinces, united to them by the ſtricteſt ties, and equally intereſted as themſelves, to maintain the ſyſtem of liberty and equality againſt the attempts of crowned deſpots. Whereever, therefore, the plan of *fraternizing nations* is mentioned, I would have it recalled to remembrance, that there exiſted, previous to it, a moſt formidable *fraternity of kings*.

The conduct of the French to the emigrants of their own nation, has been much cenſured; and unqueſtionably, whatever may be ſaid of the general principle, it is impoſſible to conceive any thing more cruel or unjuſt than

the operation of theſe laws on certain individuals. The difficulty is in ſuch caſes to ſeparate the innocent from the guilty; and to make ſuch a law as will enſure the puniſhment of the laſt, while it leaves room for the firſt to eſcape. For ſome of theſe men no puniſhment was too ſevere; while others, timid, deluded, or ignorant, merited the compaſſion of their fellow-citizens. The caſe of the emigrants will never be rightly underſtood, if we do not attend to it—that, from the beginning of the revolution, and much more in the later ſtages of it, as already ſtated, there has exiſted ſo great a ſtruggle between two parties, as merits well to be termed a *civil war*, under the appearance of *peace*. I ſhall have occaſion to illuſtrate this idea more fully ſoon; and ſhall only now obſerve, that, if this be true, we ſhall not be ſo much ſurpriſed at the ſeverities againſt the emigrants. For in all ages and nations,

tions, thoſe citizens who abandoned their country in the hour of her danger, or who took up arms againſt her cauſe, have conſtantly been treated with greater rigour than foreign foes. The enmity of fellow-citizens has ever been more inveterate than that of ſtrangers, in proportion as their love is greater, and their common duties more binding.

I have already noticed, as a change perhaps neceſſary in the circumſtances, the inſtitution of military juries, and other regulations irreconcileable with the ancient ſyſtem of diſcipline. It was feared at the time, that indiſcipline might be the conſequence of theſe alterations; and in fact, in a certain degree, this has been the caſe. Who then could have imagined that the French legiſlators would have been ſo imprudent as to increaſe this evil, by decreeing that the ſoldiers ſhould chooſe all their inferior officers? Every man of experience

in military affairs ſaw the inevitable evils that would follow from this raſh meaſure. All the generals complained of it; and the judicious Camus, commiſſary to the army in the Netherlands, told the Convention, on his return, that, if they did not repeal this decree, they would never have order or diſcipline in the army. For, added he, the majority of thoſe who are elected officers obtain their elevation by promiſing to relax diſcipline, and maintain themſelves in their place by keeping their word.

The French have been cenſured for a want of regard to religion; but, if this cenſure be juſt of ſome individuals amongſt them, it does not therefore hold of the National Convention, who in all their public conduct, have reſpected the religion of their country. With reſpect to their aſſembling on Sundays, it has been already obſerved, that the urgency and importance of their affairs might

might apologiſe for that meaſure; and it is carefully to be noticed, that Sunday in Catholic countries was never obſerved with the ſame ſtrictneſs as in England, far leſs with the rigidity of the Preſbyterians in Scotland. Such a mode of keeping Sunday does not form a part of the religion of this people: and therefore they are not to be cenſured for not complying with it.

Mr. Burke has ſaid a great deal about the public profeſſion of atheiſm made by Jacob Dupont, an obſcure deputy of the Convention, whom I never heard of before nor ſince. There are abſurd and thoughtleſs men in all public aſſemblies. There are atheiſts in England as well as in France. Nor is Scotland without its proportion, if we may believe a late phyſician of Edinburgh, who ſays, "In hâc urbe, ubi de Summi Numinis exiſtentiâ indies et acriter diſputandum

eſt *." But, whatever there may be in this, it is certain that the looſe and imprudent expreſſions made uſe of by ſome individuals in France on the ſubject of religion, were induſtriouſly circulated in foreign nations, and did infinite injury to the revolution, by giving colour to the pretext, that the French had thrown off all regard to religion. As La Source juſtly obſerved, the member who propoſed to deprive all the Catholic clergy of their ſalaries, and Jacob Dupont, who made a public profeſſion of atheiſm in the Convention, did more harm to the cauſe of France than the armies of Auſtria and Pruſſia. Theſe men were deeply miſtaken, if they thought that the majority of the nation were of their opinion: they were deeply miſtaken if they believed that even the inhabitants of the corrupt metropolis were ripe for the re-

* In this city, where the exiſtence of the Supreme Deity is daily and warmly diſputed.

jection

jection of all religion. We are not, Madam, to judge of the Pariſians as moſt of the Engliſh do, from a few people of faſhion with whom they have been acquainted. We muſt ſpeak of the *Bourgeois*, and of the great maſs of the people. Almoſt the whole of them are ſtill believers; and thoſe even who have no reaſon to give for their faith are *afraid not to believe.* In many, early prejudices continue to oppoſe the deciſions of matured reaſon; in others, relaxation of morals, by increaſing fear, has augmented, inſtead of diminiſhing ſuperſtition. In all great corrupt cities there is much religion, becauſe there is much fear.

I paſs to ſome ſmaller imprudences, which have furniſhed ground for cenſure on the French legiſlators. Their blameable haſte to *act* has often deprived them of the time needful to *plan* well; and hence obliged them to diminiſh their dignity, by undoing what they had

done. And they have always attempted ſo much at once that they have had no leiſure to explain, in many caſes, the reaſons of their conduct. To quote but one inſtance—To how many ſevere and ill-grounded cenſures have they not expoſed themſelves for want of taking pains enough to explain what they meant by the term EQUALITY; and to ſhew that they confined it to *equality of rights*, or, in other words, that all were equal in the eyes of the law, and that all had a title to *equal juſtice!* Hence the moſt abſurd prejudices were propagated reſpecting this phraſe. It was pretended, that it was meant to equalize all fortunes; a meaſure that we know, if it were practicable, could not be kept up for a ſingle week, nor for a ſingle day, ſince, even in twenty-four hours, induſtry, exertion, and virtue would obtain ſome predominance over idleneſs, inactivity, and vice. Some amongſt us imagined themſelves wiſe, when they pointed out

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the abſurdity of calling men equal, ſince by nature they were totally different in ſtrength and talents; as if any one could have been ſo abſurd as to contend for equality in that ridiculous application of the term. Finally, in England ſocieties were inſtituted to ſuppreſs *levellers*, as they were termed, although in fact and truth no ſuch perſons exiſted.

While I mention this, I cannot help recollecting an ingenious illuſtration of the argument by Mr. Garat. "Every body in France," ſays he, "knows well, that thoſe troops of weak or ignorant princes, of whom hiſtory tranſmits to us the names, and who, from the height of their thrones, have made the effects of folly deſcend on the heads of their people, were very far from being equal in talents to thoſe men of rare and exalted genius, who, in the ſilence and obſcurity of their cabinets, have enlightened the world. We all know that James II. had

neither the ſoul of Sydney, nor the philoſophy of Locke. Nobody would have ſuſpected Lewis the Fifteenth of writing Monteſquieu's Spirit of Laws. But *equality of rights* is quite a different affair."

Minuter circumſtances have alſo contributed their ſhare in diſguſting Engliſh obſervers of the French revolution. The want of order in the National Aſſembly—the indecent noiſe and confuſion—the licentious applauſes of the tribunes appeared ſhocking to Engliſhmen, accuſtomed to the dignity and regularity generally preſerved in the Houſe of Commons. It is true, in their cenſures relative to this, they did not make ſufficient allowance for the peculiar character of the French nation, nor for the intereſting nature of the ſubjects they had to diſcuſs. They did not conſider that they were comparing the calm progreſs of an old eſtabliſhed government in a time

time of profound peace, with the agitated movements of a revolution in a nation at war; and where every day produced diſcuſſions that rouſed all the paſſions, by oppoſing all prejudices, and attacking all intereſts. Tranquil ſpectators of the ſtorm, they would have had the mariners caught in the middle of the tempeſt, preſerve the ſame compoſure as they did in viewing it ſecurely from the ſhore!

I could ſhew, in ſeveral other reſpects, that ſufficient allowance has not been made for the peculiar genius of the French nation, in the cenſures paſſed on it in England. The French are a lively, impetuous, and irritable nation; and their revolution is marked with their character. It has the faults of it, and the virtues of it. I obſerve adverti ſed in the newſpapers a work of Mr. Arthur Young, entitled, "The Example of France a Warning to England."—The ſubject is copious; and, when treated by

this able and ingenious writer, muſt form an intereſting publication. I would only obſerve, that, had you even a revolution in England (which God forbid ſhould ever be neceſſary!), it would not—it *could* not be ſuch a one as the French revolution. For the men and the circumſtances are totally diſſimilar. You have not in England the ſame maſs of abuſes to change—you have not the ſame maſs of folly and vice to ſtruggle againſt—your people are neither ſo generally ignorant nor ferocious as the French populace—and, what is above all in your favour is, that you have not amongſt you that ſhocking *inequality* which disfigured human ſociety in France. There mankind were all in extremes, exceſſively exalted or exceſſively debaſed; and the people, once delivered from the tyranny of the great, having neither friend, counſellor, nor confidant, abandoned themſelves to the

the wanderings of their own ignorance or paſſions. In England, on the contrary, there is a long ſeries of claſſes of well-informed and worthy men, in the middling ranks of ſociety, who connect the rich with the poor, and the men of large property with thoſe who have none. In France the queſtion was, whether certain princes and dukes, or whether the loweſt of the people ſhould govern the country. And, whether the firſt or the laſt obtained the predominance, there was danger of tyranny. The two claſſes were too far diſtant to place confidence in each other.

There is another remark, which I think it very important to make in this place. The example of France, though in many reſpects inapplicable, will certainly, however, be often applied to England; and deductions will be made from it, that may produce very ſerious conſequences. If France does not aid

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us in advancing our liberty, let us at leaſt take care that ſhe do not furniſh the means of depriving us of part of what we have. Let the real patriots of England be on their guard. Let us beware of thinking that, becauſe a corrupt or frivolous people were unfit for a ſyſtem of extenſive liberty, that therefore ſuch a ſyſtem is bad; or, to put the caſe more accurately, let us beware of concluding, that, becauſe a people degraded by deſpotiſm were unfit to be all at once entruſted with freedom, that therefore it might not have been ſafely conferred on them, and their condition rendered more happy by it, if they had been conducted to it by a gradual and wiſe preparation. It is too common to reaſon from abuſes againſt the proper uſe of things. We have ſeen the licentiouſneſs of a people: but let us guard againſt drawing arguments from it to increaſe the power of monarchs.

This

This letter has extended much beyond the limits I originally deſigned.—I muſt now haſten to a concluſion, and only mention in a curſory manner the other objects that remain to be treated.

If I had had more leiſure, I would have pointed out, amongſt other cauſes of the erroneous judgments of our countrymen reſpecting the French revolution, their confounding the *agents* with the *principles* of it.—The principles were often pure, when the agents were moſt depraved. On many occaſions when Engliſhmen were railing againſt France, an intelligent man might have replied to them: "You are only painting the vices of Marat or Orleans: but Heaven, which accompliſhed uſeful ends by Borgia and Catiline, may alſo promote a ſyſtem of wiſdom and juſtice by means of Orleans and Marat."

I ſhould have ſhewn that many, if not all, of the evils of the French revolution may

may be traced up to the effects of the old corrupting ſyſtem of government. That ſyſtem had deſtroyed the morals of the people, and rendered them unfit for liberty. As all things under it were managed by intrigue, it had created a general ſyſtem of SUSPICION. That ſuſpicion has cauſed the ruin of the beſt concerted meaſures; for, as no man truſted his neighbour, no body of men acted in concert, nor could any public functionary preſerve for any length of time the confidence of thoſe under him. Eternal denunciations were made againſt thoſe entruſted with the executive part of government; and all of them were readily believed by the people. Hence the conſtant changes of miniſters, and the eternal accuſations of generals, and other public functionaries. Many of theſe men, who were originally honeſt, appear to have been forced into bad conduct, by having their patience worn

out

out with endleſs inculpations. Hence the want of general union ſo neceſſary at ſuch a period. Hence the multiplied and abſurd ſeverity of laws againſt emigrants, conſpirators, traitors, &c. &c. Mr. Burke, to whom I am ready to render all juſtice where I can, juſtly remarked, that there was too much ſuſpicion manifeſted even in the firſt conſtitution. It was true: but he did not penetrate into the cauſe of it; or rather it would not have ſuited his argument to bring that cauſe forward. The truth is, that ſuſpicion was not the fault of the new ſyſtem, but of the old, which, by corrupting all, had cut up the roots of confidence, and rendered every man afraid of another.

The maſs of folly and vice introduced into the nation by the ancient ſyſtem furniſhed a terrible obſtacle to the revolution, and might alone have been ſufficient to account for its failure.

Never

Never before had the world ſeen deſpotiſm united with ſo high a degree of civilization. Hence depravity was carried to a degree unknown in modern times, and in European climates. All the great towns were more or leſs debauched; and Paris was a ſink of vice and corruption. A body thus diſeaſed was not to be cured by ordinary means. Humanity would have poured the balm of *reform* into the ulcers; but Reaſon pronounced them too corrupt to be cured. "Enſe recidendum" was her awful ſentence when ſhe lifted up the ſword of revolution.

If any proof had been wanted of the degree of folly and depravity to which the old ſyſtem had reduced the principal claſſes of ſociety in France, what could be a more ſtriking one than the conduct of the emigrant princes and their adherents in Germany? Obſerve what kind of life they led there. Expoſed

poſed to the greateſt dangers, and to the chance of loſing all that was dear to them in life, they were unable to forget the diſſipation of the ancient court: they revived in exile all its follies and all its vices.—Coblentz became a miniature of Verſailles; and the men who had their character, their fortune, their life itſelf at ſtake, were occupied, juſt as they uſed to be at the old court, in intrigues, and quarrelling about miſtreſſes. The ſame thing happened in Italy, where even the licentious Romans were ſcandalized at the vices of the refugee prieſts. If ſimilar things have not been obſerved of thoſe in England, it is becauſe the eſtabliſhed decency of our manners has ſcared them from ſhewing their real character.

Such were the men which the old government of France had formed, and ſuch the men who were to be *re-made* and moulded to republican virtues. Our friends

friends in England have not ſufficiently attended to this. They have not reflected how difficult it is to reform an old corrupt monarchy: they have forgotten that it is in fact a *new birth*.

I have already hinted, that diſtant ſpectators, in judging of various parts of the French revolution, have not allowed ſufficiently for the preſſure of circumſtances, perhaps the moſt extraordinary that ever occurred to a people. I will juſt mention a few of them:—

I.

The inveteracy of a powerful ariſtocratic party, which operated from the very beginning of the revolution, and which has kept up an unceaſing irritation amongſt the people.

II.

The manifeſto of the Duke of Brunſwick, whoſe threats were ever preſent to the minds of the people.

III. The

III.

The conſpiracy of kings, formed at Pilnitz; an aſſociation of a new kind, as terrible as it was monſtrous. Our countryman, Dr. Parr, has left me nothing to add to his eloquent reflections on the ſubject.

IV.

That real civil war, which, under the name of peace, has exiſted in France ſince the beginning of the revolution, and openly broke forth in the latter periods of it. I promiſed to illuſtrate this more at large, but muſt defer doing ſo till another opportunity.

I could enumerate ſeveral other circumſtances, if my leiſure permitted me to enter into details. I muſt, however, farther obſerve, that our friends in England, in judging of the French revolution, do not ſeem in many caſes to have allowed even for the ordinary weakneſſes of human nature. It has always been the

foible of man, to run from one extreme to another—Grant that the French have, for the moment, run from deſpotiſm to licentiouſneſs—they have committed the common fault of our nature. Let us reaſon of them as we would do of ourſelves, and let us allow them time to return to the juſt medium.

No man is more ſhocked than I am at the crimes and horrors that have taken place in France, or to ſpeak more juſtly in Paris, during the revolution. But moſt of them have been the work of villains, who profited of a time of public confuſion to work out their own infernal purpoſes. Moſt of them have therefore no real connection with the revolution; and with reſpect to the few that have, it muſt be remembered, that a period of revolution is not to be judged of by the rules that apply to ſeaſons of peace and tranquillity. Great public commotions, ſuch as thoſe in France,

bring forth all the paſſions. — If the French revolution has been ſtained with ſcenes of vice and cruelty, it has alſo exhibited ſome of the nobleſt examples of generoſity and virtue that any age or nation can boaſt of. It has exhibited acts that rival thoſe of Greece and Rome: and ſurely France merits ſome indulgence from mankind, if, with men formed under the old deſpotiſm, ſhe has not been able, all at once, to carry into practice the ſublimeſt principles of juſtice and wiſdom ever adopted by mankind. Her errors will paſs away; her crimes are momentary, and will be forgotten; her *principles* will be immortal, and her declaration of the rights of man will periſh only with the human race.

Revolutions exhibit man acting on a great ſcale: hence they produce great virtues, and at the ſame time great vices. Three years of confuſion form a vaſt period in the life of an individual; but they

they make only a point in the *life of a nation*. They make, indeed, almoſt an imperceptible point, if that nation is conſidered as a part of the great whole, and as affecting, by its conduct, the future fate of Europe, and of the world. The revolutions of all other nations, our own and that of America excepted, have done nothing for mankind. What ſignifies it to the world who is deſpot in Turkey, who vanquiſhes or is vanquiſhed in Perſia; who is Pope of Rome? The conteſt then is about the *maſters*, but the *ſyſtem* continues the ſame. In France, the conteſt has been about *principles*, and theſe the moſt important, the moſt ſacred, the moſt eſſential to the happineſs of man. Let France be arraigned before the tribunal of the human race—ſhe muſt plead guilty to many charges—but ſhe will ſtill appear a meritorious criminal. For who before her declared aloud, in the name of twenty-

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five millions of men, to attending Europe, thoſe truths which lay concealed in the works of a few philoſophers? Who, before her, dared to combat *all* errors, and braving every prejudice, through good report and evil report, publiſhed the complete manifeſto of the neglected rights of human kind!!

But I muſt conclude. What I have already written, or may farther write, will, I am perſuaded, find favour with you, and with a few more of the well-informed and reflecting: but I do not expect that ſuch ideas will meet with general approbation, at this moment of agitation and prejudice. For my part, I am prepared for cenſure; but I entreat you to witneſs, that I appeal from the public judgment of 1792, to that of 1799. I might make the period ſhorter, but I am unwilling to be thought enthuſiaſtic in my expectations, and therefore

have ſtated ſeven years. I will add, that certain perſons will do well to be moderate in their triumph at this moment, leſt their ſentiments and declarations ſhould be recorded and produced at a time when they may be leſs ſuitable than they are juſt now.

Whether France will finally be able to extricate herſelf from an inteſtine, as well as external war, which now aſſail her at once—whether ſhe will be able to ſupport her republic; or, fatigued with anarchy, repoſe herſelf in limited monarchy; or finally, overwhelmed by her foes, be forced to accept that conſtitution which they chooſe to give her, are points that ſurpaſs my powers to decide. Were I to conjecture, I would ſay, that ſhe will ſucceed in maintaining her own freedom, but not in communicating it to her neighbours. But ſhould ſhe even be overpowered by her enemies, and ſhould continental deſpots

wiſh to load her with the moſt galling chains, I cannot forget, Madam, that Britain is concerned in this tranſaction! And this recollection cheers my mind; for a free and generous people cannot condemn twenty-five millions of men to be ſlaves! No: The ſevereſt ſentence that England can ſuffer to be pronounced, even on her rival, would be, "Let France be delivered from the dominion of a ferocious mob—let her be delivered from anarchy, and reſtored to reaſon and lawful ſway!" Thus, terminate how it will, I truſt the French revolution will promote the good of France, and this proſpect conſoles me amidſt the preſent evils.

The French revolution began in wiſdom; but what wiſe men begin well, fools often by their interference ſpoil at the end. The French legiſlators borrowed from ignorance only the ſtrength of its *arm*; they certainly never intended

to make uſe of its diſordered *head*. One revolution therefore ſufficed all wiſe men; but the court forced a ſecond one, and then all was confounded. The people were called upon to judge, when they had no means of judging. They had already *acted*, and their honeſt energy ought then to have ceaſed. Deprived of the means of obtaining knowledge, by the degradation into which the ancient ſyſtem of civil polity had placed them, they ought not to have been placed in the rank of political judges.

It is much too raſh to conclude, that the cauſe of France is loſt—the probability is ſtill in its favour; and were it otherwiſe, Madam, I ſhould ſay, "Victrix cauſa placuit diis, ſed victa Catoni*." Mean muſt be his mind, and low his thoughts, who can regret having eſpouſed

* The victorious cauſe pleaſed the gods, but Cato was for the vanquiſhed.

ſuch

ſuch a cauſe, or wiſh that he had taken the ſide of corrupt politicians, inſtead of that of a people ſtruggling for freedom, the firſt gift of Heaven; cum quibus errare malim, quam cum illis recte ſentire*.

When I ſaid that the French revolution began in wiſdom, I admitted that it came afterwards into the hands of fools. But *the foundation was laid in wiſdom.* I muſt intreat you to mark that circumſtance; for if even the ſuperſtructure ſhould fall, the foundation would remain. The BASTILLE, though honoured by Mr. Burke with the title of the *king's caſtle* (a ſhocking ſatire on every humane, and juſt prince), will never be rebuilt in France; and the declaration of the rights of man will remain eternal, as the truths it contains. In the early ages of the

* With whom I would rather err, than think rightly with the others.—A hyperbolical expreſſion of Cicero.

world,

world, the revolutions of ſtates, and the incurſions of barbarians, often overwhelmed knowledge, and occaſioned *the loſs of principles:* but ſince the invention of printing has diffuſed ſcience over Europe, and accumulated the means of extending and preſerving truth, PRINCIPLES can no more be loſt. Like vigorous ſeeds committed to the boſom of the fertile earth, accidental circumſtances may prevent their vegetation for a time, but they will remain alive, and ready to ſpring up at the firſt favourable moment.

What then is the concluſion of the whole matter? This, ſurely, that PRINCIPLES are never to be abandoned, however unſucceſsful may be the attempt to carry them into *practice.* We in England, however, have had practical experience of the good effects of right principles: our maxims of liberty have proved their intrinſic worth, by counteracting

teracting even the natural defects of our country. They have made, as Addiſon happily expreſſes, "our bleak rocks and barren mountains ſmile;" and on the careful preſervation of theſe maxims depends the continuance of the bleſſings they have procured us. But I muſt conclude:

"O Liberty! expand thy vital ray,
"O'er the dark globe diffuſe celeſtial day;
"Glad diſtant regions by thy bliſsful voice,
"'Till India's wilds, and Afric's ſands rejoice:
"Thy ſpirit breathe, wide as creation's ſpace;
"Exalt, illume, inſpire the human race;
"As heaven's own æther thro' expanſion whirl'd,
"Attracts, ſublimes, and animates the world*."

Thus wiſhes a worthy member of the Britiſh Senate, and ſuch are your wiſhes and mine.

ADIEU.

* Courtenay.

FINIS.

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